

CHARLES SUMNER

An Essay by Carl Schurz

New facts about a controversial figure of Lincoln's day. A recently discovered manuscript by a talented biographer who knew Sumner & worked with him.

EDITED BY ARTHUR REED HOGUE



"A REAL LITERARY FIND"—

J. G. Randall, eminent Lincoln authority.

A first draft manuscript of this essay on Charles Sumner was discovered in a Chicago real estate office safe in 1948. It was found among some of Schurz's personal papers, including over a thousand holograph letters to members of his family and friends, plus a large collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, diaries, and pamphlets. An unfinished second draft of this essay is in the important collection of Schurz items at the Library of Congress, but neither it nor this complete first draft has been published until now. The itinerary of these private papers and the newly discovered manuscript is impossible to establish, but very possibly they lay in the real estate office safe for nearly a quarter of a century before Professor Hogue discovered them.

But the importance of this essay does not lie so much in its discovery as in the fact that Carl Schurz wrote it, and that it concerns Charles Sumner. Carl Schurz's biography of Lincoln is still recognized as basic to Lincoln scholarship. And Charles

(Continued on back flap)

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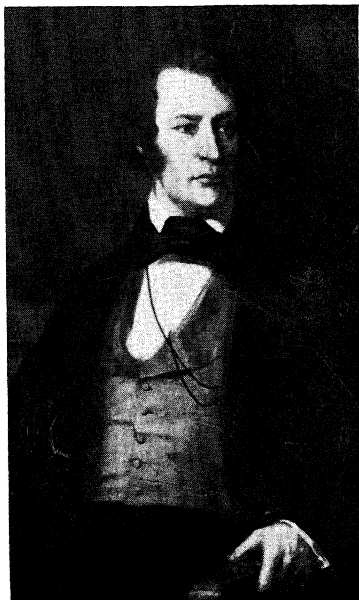
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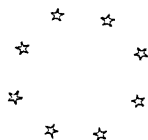


Charles Sumner

CHARLES SUMNER

A N E S S A Y B Y C A R L S C H U R Z

Edited by Arthur Reed Hogue



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U R B A N A

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Introduction

CARL SCHURZ, the author of this essay, possessed unique qualifications for writing a biographical study of his contemporary, Charles Sumner. Schurz could draw upon first-hand knowledge of many of the events and excitements in which Sumner achieved prominence, and Schurz understood thoroughly Sumner's thought and feeling. Both men worked for the same causes, both men invoked the same principles when dealing with the tragic issues and aftermath of the Civil War in the United States. Yet behind these similarities were some differences in origin and background which undoubtedly gave Schurz the advantage of a critical perspective, for he entered American politics after receiving a German university education. In addition to his personal knowledge and perspective, Schurz could bring into play a literary talent which enabled him to deal skillfully with his materials.

Schurz was born in 1829 in Liblar, a village in Rhenish Prussia. He attended the University of Bonn;

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joined, as a liberal, in the revolutionary activities of 1848; and spent some years in exile, living in France, Switzerland, and England, before coming to the United States in 1852. After several months of indecision about occupation and residence, he made his home in Watertown, Wisconsin. There, as a Republican, he took part in the political campaign of 1856. His campaign speeches four years later brought him into national prominence in the course of his extraordinary exertions to secure votes for Abraham Lincoln in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

From this time until Sumner's death in 1874 the two men, Schurz and Sumner, agreed upon fundamental policies and principles. Schurz, like Sumner, pressed Lincoln toward a policy of emancipation. He urged it from Spain, following his appointment as Minister in 1861; he urged it from camp, after his appointment as brigadier general in the Union army in 1862. When the war ended, Schurz, like Sumner, opposed President Johnson and felt the necessity of Congressional reconstruction to secure for the Negro the equality of rights which abolitionists had long advocated. Sumner encouraged Schurz to accept President Johnson's assignment of a tour of inspection through the South in 1865. The result was a famous report on postwar conditions which strengthened the Congressional rather than the Presidential plans for reconstruction.

In 1869, representing Missouri, Schurz had opportunities to work even more closely with Sumner in the United States Senate where Schurz agreed with Sumner on the need for civil service reform; he opposed, as Sumner did, the corruption of President Grant's ad-

ministration; and he attempted, like Sumner, to defeat Grant's re-election in 1872.

When Sumner died, in 1874, the people of Boston recognized the close association of the careers of Schurz and Sumner by inviting Schurz to deliver the eulogy at memorial services for their representative.

It is now possible to prove that twenty years after the eulogy Schurz addressed himself to the project of a biography of Sumner. By 1894 he had demonstrated his ability as a biographer: first, with a two-volume life of Henry Clay for the American Statesmen Series, and second, with a masterful article on Abraham Lincoln, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1891. In the latter he reviewed, ostensibly, the ten volumes of John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Actually, after brief mention of their *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, Schurz launched into a biography of his own, soon to be published by Houghton Mifflin Company in the form of a little book, which received then—and continues to receive—the most favorable comment.

The manuscripts of his essay on Charles Sumner clearly show that Schurz intended to follow the long "book review" pattern employed in the Lincoln article. In the appendix to this volume the reader will find Schurz's remarks on the four volumes of Edward L. Pierce, *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, published in Boston by the Roberts brothers, 1877-1893. Certainly Schurz leaned heavily on Pierce's work for facts. Pierce was the literary executor of Sumner and had spent some nineteen years with the tremendous collection of papers—over 40,000 items—which Sumner left behind him. In 1894, when Schurz began to write,

Pierce's volumes contained the best printed evidence on Sumner's career. Pierce knew of the project of Schurz and encouraged—even urged—its completion. A letter in the possession of the editor makes this abundantly clear:

Rome 23 Jan 94

My dear Mr Schurz,

Last eve [nin] g I received by post from Boston, J. C. B. Davis's book on Ala [bama] Claims. Of course it was written as a reply to me. I felt quite triumphant to find that there was nothing for me to reply to—as I had already anticipated everything. I send you, however, some comments upon his book which may possibly serve you.

But where is your article on Sumner? I expected it many months ago and thought you were to enter upon it last summer when you had completed some address or paper you had then in hand. I pray you not to delay longer. There is no occasion of your saying much or indeed anything of the biography, but do use the opportunity to set forth Sumner's character and his place in history.

Last eve [nin] g I received Hoar's article on Sumner in the Forum. It is magnificent. I wish that one who can rise at times to such exaltations would not so often fall below them. Still I think we ought to judge people by their best.

[Paragraph omitted]. . .

Yours truly,

EDWARD L. PIERCE

Schurz did complete a rough draft of the Sumner biography. He completed it in the sense that he began with Sumner's birth and carried the account through Sumner's death. Parts of the draft were sketchy, but the story was there. He also began the revision of the rough draft, which he elaborated and rewrote and hoped to

finish. Since this book is the combination of the two manuscripts, their history deserves brief mention.

In 1948 the first draft of the essay was discovered in Chicago among some personal papers of Schurz. His immediate family had collected and kept in their possession well over a thousand original holograph letters to members of his family and to friends; they also kept a large collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, diaries, and pamphlets. All of this material, thanks to the heirs of Paul Steinbrecher, is now in the possession of the editor for purposes of study and publication. The first draft of the work on Sumner did not go with the second draft to the Library of Congress where the speeches, political papers, and correspondence of Schurz form an important collection. Instead the rough draft followed the private papers on their mysterious travels. The certainties of that itinerary are impossible to establish. Agathe Schurz, Carl's elder daughter, collected many personal letters from her father's friends and relatives; then she prepared transcriptions of the German originals, some of which appeared as a volume of letters to accompany the German edition of Schurz's *Reminiscences* (1912). Apparently nothing more was done with the original private papers after that. Marianne Schurz, Agathe's younger sister, was the last of Carl's children to survive. It was she who sold her father's library, September 5, 1924, to the late Paul Steinbrecher of Chicago. Either then, or very soon after, through the gift of Wilhelmina Schiffer, niece of Carl Schurz, Paul Steinbrecher acquired several bundles of letters and papers, the family collection to which Agathe had added. In the midst of them lay the first draft of

the Sumner essay. Mr. Steinbrecher stored these materials in the safe and vault of his Chicago real estate office where they remained undisturbed until 1948, when a search initiated by the editor uncovered hundreds of Schurz items in a series of finds.

The manuscript pages of the first draft of the Sumner essay are all approximately $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$ and they number sixty-eight. Sometimes Schurz wrote on the backs of galley sheets from *Harper's Weekly*, sometimes the letterhead of the New York *Evening Post*, one page is a sheet of correspondence paper printed for the Hamburg-American Packet Company; still other pages are yellow scratch pad sheets. Across them all runs the minute, crabbed, nervous script of Schurz, whose corrections and notes clearly indicate that he expected to write a more polished and elaborate draft.

The second draft, now in the Library of Congress, was never finished. Schurz did not forget it, however. Frederic Bancroft and William A. Dunning, who finished the third and concluding volume of the *Reminiscences* of Carl Schurz, give evidence (p. 452) of his continued interest in the biography:

When exchanging personal news with an old friend in February, 1906, hardly a fortnight before completing his seventy-seventh year, Mr Schurz cheerfully remarked: 'After I finish my memoirs I shall take up the Sumner and complete that.'

His death soon afterward prevented him from completing either the memoirs or the Sumner. Elsewhere in the volume just quoted (p. 433), Bancroft and Dunning comment:

Of systematic study in the field of his projected work on the Civil War nothing had even engaged his serious attention save a long and unfinished essay on Charles Sumner. A short study of Lincoln had appeared in 1891, and was at once generally pronounced a classic; and it was expected that Mr Schurz's intimacy with Sumner and sympathetic view of his policies would some day do as much for the historical repute of the Massachusetts Senator as the earlier study had done for the great President.

The writing of the second draft Schurz brought down to a discussion of the "Trent" affair at the close of the year 1861. This draft was written on sheets measuring 6"×10½". There are ninety-six pages. Schurz wrote two versions of the manuscript pages 92-96; the alternate version of the manuscript pages 92-96 can be found in the appendix. Rewriting was a common practice with Schurz. Evidently he would turn over in his mind the phrasing of whole sentences and paragraphs which he sometimes jotted down on scraps of paper—anything which happened to be at hand—backs of letters occasionally served this purpose. The editor found several of these trial sentences and paragraphs while looking through the entire collection of private papers and some examples are given in the notes on the essay. They presented, incidentally, the most difficult problems of transcription—two of them must have been written while riding on a rapidly moving train or vehicle. The deciphering problem is better explained by a facsimile than by words—hence the illustration (see Appendix III).

Apart from their content the two drafts have some real value in providing the opportunity to see the literary craftsman at his task. While it is common enough to find manuscripts of several drafts in some fields of

literature, few historical writings enable one to follow the author's procedures as he moves toward a final copy for publication. In this printed combination of the two manuscripts the reader can see at once the difference in style and completeness of expression soon after the "Trent" case on page 103 where the second draft concludes and the rough draft begins to carry the story on to the time of Sumner's death.

Perhaps Schurz did not always improve his work by rewriting. In the editor's opinion, now and then Schurz destroyed his initial vivid phrases in the attempt at elegance of diction and elevation of tone. For example, when describing the Senate about 1851, he wrote in the rough draft:

What was left of the old generation of public men was mediocrity and commonplace—country lawyers grown up in the politics of their localities and had [sic] a slight smattering of general knowledge gathered from the reading of some of the standard histories—tobacco-chewing statesmen with dull and heavy minds, uncouth manners and pompous airs.

The second draft rephrases:

There were some men of the same generation left, both Whigs and Democrats—heavy respectabilities, with a smattering of general knowledge, much official experience and practice in political shifts, traditional notions of policy untroubled by originality of thought, and an effluent supply of solemn commonplace.

The editorial task has involved the splicing of the two drafts of the essay in such a way as to use the writing of Schurz throughout. The two examples quoted here are merely to illustrate the quality of the two texts of the biography. The editor has not taken it upon

himself to switch from one text to the other at will save at one point: the opening sentence, as explained in the notes, comes from the rough draft which did not begin with the book review comments found at the opening of the second draft. After the opening sentence the editor followed the second draft without interruption as far as Schurz carried his revision, i.e. to page 103. The only alteration of the structure of either draft consists of some omissions to avoid duplication of statement. These omissions are indicated in the notes. Neither draft was ever completed, of course, and there is no way of knowing how the text might have looked if Schurz had finished it for publication. However, as far as Schurz carried it, the essay is here presented to the reader.

Finished or unfinished, it was not the intention of Schurz to accompany his text with a vast scholarly apparatus, nor did he plan to take up in detail all of the evidence on controversial matters. The essay on Lincoln did not contain footnotes when it appeared; undoubtedly Schurz expected the essay on Sumner to be managed in the same way. In the second draft, Schurz does not always indicate the source of his quotations. The editor has felt a certain responsibility for the identification of these quotations, whenever possible—incidentally, Schurz's personal library has been used in checking the references which appear in the notes.

Where Schurz indicated his references he usually mentioned the memoir of E. L. Pierce, discussed above, pp. 3-4, or the fifteen-volume set of Sumner's *Works* (Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1875-1883). Therefore the editor, when tracking down unidentified quotations,

employed the same books, rather than going to *The Congressional Globe* and other sources available to the scholar. The editorial policy throughout has aimed at preserving the character of the work as Schurz wrote it. Thus historical commentary on Schurz's treatment of the Civil War issues has been held to a minimum, for, once started on that long road, the editor would find no terminal. He would be in peril of crushing a brief historical essay under an overload of variant interpretations of the causes of the Civil War, the works of revisionists, the corrections, qualifications, and emendations of subsequent students.

In the first draft the source of a quotation is more commonly given than in the second and these references have been retained in the notes where they stand without brackets. Other notes, within brackets, are editorial.

The punctuation employed by Schurz deserves a word of comment. Schurz could—and did—write complicated sentences. He sometimes piled one dependent clause upon another until he had crowded two hundred words or more into a single sentence! Frequently, if not habitually, Schurz would omit, in his manuscripts, the first of the two commas one would expect to find setting off a dependent clause. The editor has supplied the missing comma to enable the reader to make his way through long Teutonic sentences. Those scholars who have a keen and determined interest in the comma usage employed by Schurz, when he was composing rapidly, are referred to the large collection of original Schurz manuscripts in the Library of Congress.

The real value of this essay depends upon the success with which Schurz fulfilled the task of setting "forth

Sumner's character and his place in history." It was not an easy assignment which Pierce gave him.

Charles Sumner engaged in many controversies at a time when it was fashionable to give emotion free rein in political debate and to use extravagant language in arguments uttered with the greatest force. Sumner excelled at this. Of course he made enemies as well as friends. An objective view of Sumner was, and still is, difficult to obtain. The embers of those Civil War controversies still glow in the United States affecting, among others, the judgments of trained historians. The issues which men of Sumner's day argued can still, on occasion, become current issues, arousing century-old prejudices whenever they come into debate. Such prejudices are often, in fact, so deeply ingrained as to go unrecognized by those who possess them. The result is that when men like Sumner are introduced for discussion their real personalities are completely obscured in the smoke and dust raised by conflicting prejudices. Inevitably Sumner the moralist in politics will be judged by the undeclared criteria of the legalist or the opportunist in politics; inevitably Sumner the doctrinaire and theorist, interested in principles, will be judged by the unacknowledged criteria of the party organization worker; Sumner the humanitarian will be classified by the Southern sympathizer with the "carpet-baggers," who employed reconstruction measures, not as the means of launching the Negro into citizenship, but as a device for maintaining the Republican party in power.

Charles Sumner the moralist, the doctrinaire, the humanitarian, made a tremendous impact on the mind

of his own generation, always, however, as a figure embroiled in controversy. He needs to be studied without prejudice—or, if that is not possible, at least without undeclared prejudice. Perhaps even at this date it is possible for a clearer estimate of Sumner to appear. Schurz could be expected to portray Sumner in a good light. To do otherwise would have been hypocritical and insincere—a flagrant denial of all those causes which Schurz and Sumner advocated together. At the same time, Schurz was fair-minded and perceptive. He admitted Sumner had blind spots and Schurz could now and then question the wisdom of Sumner's acts—and his own!

Here, then, is an unusual essay, first composed about 1894, rewritten in part but never completed, lost for a generation in a bundle of personal papers, and now, after recent discoveries, presented to the public for the first time.

The editor acknowledges gratefully the assistance given to him by several people. Mrs. Paul Steinbrecher joined enthusiastically in the search for the private papers of Carl Schurz. I wish to express my thanks to her and to Mrs. John T. Windle for permission to publish the rough draft and other papers pertaining to the Sumner biography; to Mr. Arthur E. Young of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress for aid in securing photostat copies of Schurz manuscripts in the Library of Congress; and to my former colleagues at the University of Illinois, Frederick C. Dietz, Arthur E. Bestor, and James G. Randall, who all made helpful suggestions and freely gave advice and the benefit of their own experience. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the con-

tribution made to this volume by my wife, who patiently untangled many a snarled page of Schurz's manuscripts, typed transcriptions, and led in the search for unidentified quotations. For editorial policy and for any errors the editor, of course, bears the sole and entire responsibility.

A. R. H.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Charles Sumner

THE FAME of Abraham Lincoln has so much overshadowed that of all other political leaders in the great struggle which resulted in the abolition of slavery in this republic that they are in danger of not receiving the full measure of consideration due to them.¹ And among those leaders there was none who, while cooperating with Abraham Lincoln for a common end, at the same time presented a more striking contrast to him in point of breeding and education, of habits and views of life, of ways of thinking and methods of dealing with men and things, than Charles Sumner.

He was the very opposite of the log-cabin-born statesman who had to pick up his learning by the wayside and to work his way to public usefulness and distinction through a precarious struggle for the necessities of life. His cradle stood in Boston, then the center of American culture. Born in 1811, he grew up under the influence of a refined family life and of worldly circumstances, not, indeed, affluent, but sufficient to enable the father, who

was a college-bred man, to secure to his son the best education the country afforded. Having passed through the Latin School, Charles entered Harvard University and graduated in 1830. He had not been remarkable as a boy—slender and awkward, good-natured, well-behaved, not given to boyish pranks, capable of laughing heartily at others' jests, but not of making any himself, studious in the highest degree and an insatiable devourer of books; of a character amiable, candid, simple, frank, enthusiastic, ingenuous; devoid of wit or sense of humor; as Park Benjamin said, "if one told Charles Sumner that the moon was made of green cheese, he would controvert the fact in all sincerity, and give good reason why it could not be so."² After a year devoted to general studies, mostly historical, he entered the Harvard Law School in 1831, conceived an enthusiasm for legal studies and won the warm friendship of the principal professor, Judge Story, a friendship which became to him a constant inspiration and encouragement. His fondest dream was to become a great jurist like those he had read of in history; and this ambition was stimulated by a visit to Washington, where, introduced by Judge Story, he made the acquaintance of the great luminaries of the law from Chief Justice Marshall down, and where he heard the great orators speak, Webster, and Clay, and Calhoun, and where he conceived an intense dislike for the turmoils of politics, thinking that he would never see Washington again.

But when in 1834 he had been admitted to the bar, it soon became evident that he was not made for a practicing attorney. While his almost religious devotion to his studies and an excellent memory made him a

storehouse of legal knowledge, he was observed not to possess what is commonly called a "legal mind." From the case in hand he was always apt to wander off into speculative discursions. His arguments, when he made any, were more remarkable for historical research and "deep reading" than a skillful and alert handling of legal points. He, therefore, naturally drifted off into the literary department of jurisprudence. When a student at the Harvard Law School he had been its librarian and composed a valuable catalogue with learned notes. He soon began to write articles for the "American Jurist," then edited, as court reporter, three volumes of Judge Story's decisions, and revised and completed Dunlap's "Admiralty Practice." He became essentially a literary jurist, and it was this literary trend in his nature that remained in him also in his political career a stronger element than the practical faculty of dealing with the actualities of life. Judge Story spoke of him as "a young lawyer, giving promise of the most eminent distinction in his profession, with truly extraordinary attainments, literary and judicial,"³ and he thought he would "die content, so far as his professorship was concerned, if Charles Sumner were to succeed him."⁴ But Charles Sumner at the desk of his attorney's office was evidently out of place. He felt it himself, sometimes despairingly, and yearned for an escape, even if it be a temporary one.

It came in December 1837 in the shape of a journey to Europe. To visit the old world had been with him a "vision of boyhood," inspired by his historical reading, "filling his mind and imagination."⁵ "I shall aim," he wrote to a friend, "to see *society* in all its forms which

are accessible to me; to see men of all characters; to observe institutions and laws; to go circuits and attend terms and parliaments; and then come home and be happy.”⁶ [To another he wrote:] “My standard of knowledge and character must be elevated, and my own ambition have higher objects.”⁷ His anticipations were fully satisfied. Armed with ample introductions he visited France, Italy, Austria, Germany, and England. His journal and letters to his friends describe his experiences with charming simplicity and joyous vividness. In Paris he reveled in science, art, literature, and social enjoyments, met Tocqueville, Victor Cousin, Michel Chevalier, the Duc de Broglie, Ortolan, Sismondi and other men of distinction; attended courts of justice, the proceedings of which he found amusingly strange. In Italy he plunged headlong into the study of language, literature and art treasures. In Austria he was received by Prince Metternich. In Berlin he enjoyed the conversation of the great Humboldt, of Savigny the jurist, and of the historians Ranke and Raumer. In Heidelberg he was the guest of Mittermaier and Thibaut, the most famous law professors at the University.

But it was in England that he found the culmination of his delights. He had hardly set foot on English soil and presented a few introductions when he was welcomed by persons of high distinction in law, politics, literature, and society with a kindness which almost bewildered him. First the members of the legal profession claimed him as their own. Every avenue of information concerning English practice was opened to him with the most complaisant readiness. He sat by invitation with the judges on the bench at Westminster, at the Old

Bailey, and on the circuits. Soon he had familiar intercourse with almost every judge or barrister of renown in the kingdom. During the London season he became a veritable lion in society. His daily recurring embarrassment was to choose between conflicting invitations to breakfasts, luncheons, dinners and soirées. When the season was over great houses of the nobility and the more modest abodes of men of letters competed for his company. His hosts vied with one another in opening to him the way to whatever was thought would interest him. Thus he saw England in her glory. He witnessed the coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey, and heard her read her first speech from the throne. Whenever he wished to attend the debates in the House of Lords or the Commons, he had his place regularly assigned to him. Bishops called him up to speak at public dinners. He was asked to respond to a toast at a Lord Mayor's banquet. He lodged under Lord Brougham's roof, heard him mingle Greek epigrams with profanity across the dinner table, and talked familiarly with him about law and literature. He sat under the cataract of Macaulay's conversation, discussed the British historians with Hallam, enjoyed with Wordsworth the charm of the lakes and hills at Rydal Mount, listened to Carlyle's growls at the Chelsea fireside and to Bulwer's effeminate lisp at tea parties, exchanged Latin quotations with gray-headed peers, and was favored with the friendship of the Duchess of Sutherland as well as the smiles of Lady Blessington. He had not been in England many months when it was remarked that there were but few Englishmen who had so large an acquaintance among the distinguished persons of that country as

Mr. Sumner. He enjoyed it immensely. The letters he sent home overflowed with interesting information, anecdote, and happiness. As he wrote once, he could "hardly believe his eyes and ears at times."⁸

Nor was the pleasant surprise all on one side. The extraordinary favor he met with rose to the proportions of a social event and became a subject of public notice. That a young man of less than thirty, a stranger, without any prestige of social position or public fame, the son of a mere sheriff of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, a young briefless attorney, should so suddenly have become a favorite guest in the most cultivated circles of so exclusive a society as that of England, was indeed a remarkable occurrence. Neither did he possess an uncommonly brilliant power of conversation that might have caused a sensation, although he no doubt had much to say worth listening to. The mystery of his social success was probably best solved by a writer in the "Quarterly Review" who a few months after Sumner's return to America spoke of him as presenting "in his own person a decisive proof that an American gentleman, without official rank or widespread reputation, by mere dint of courtesy, candor, an entire absence of pretension, an appreciating spirit, and a cultivated mind, may be received on a perfect footing of equality in the best English circles, social, political, and intellectual."⁹ And as a woman's judgment upon such things is especially valuable, Lady Wharncliffe may be quoted, who wrote: "I never knew an American who had the degree of social success he had; owing, I think, to the real elevation and truth of his character, his *genuine* nobleness of thought and aspiration, his kindness of heart, his absence of

dogmatism and oratorical display, his general amiability, his cultivation of mind, and his appreciation of England without any thing approaching to flattery of ourselves or depreciation of his own country.”¹⁰

He returned to America in the spring of 1840. His life had so far been very much like that of a high-born young Englishman. After having enjoyed the best of educations at home, he had gone on his travels to see the world, and, like one belonging to the top-rank of human society, he had moved familiarly among the great, the powerful, and the renowned men and women of his time. The fascination of this intercourse had indeed not weakened his republican principles, nor made him less an American. The social inequalities in England, which he observed with painful interest amid the splendors surrounding him, had even intensified his democratic instincts, and he debated within himself various plans for reforming England politically and socially. His views of life had become enlarged, his ideals elevated, his imagination and ambition inspired by great living examples, and he came home a full-grown idealist. Now to settle down again to the drudgery of his little law office in Boston, in order to build up a practice for a living, was an irksome task. It happened frequently that he entertained his clients, of whom there were very few, about the great men he had seen abroad, when they were impatient to talk about their cases, and he soon found the financial part of the business to be entirely beyond his comprehension. He confessed himself that the year following was “the least productive of his life.”¹¹

The sensation of dreariness in his daily work was

somewhat relieved not only by his renewed personal intercourse with his old friends Longfellow, Hillard, and Felton, all men of letters, but also by the warm reception accorded to him by the otherwise exclusive "best society" of Boston which found him very acceptable since he had been a favorite in the best society of England. There was indeed nothing in this country approaching the best of English society as nearly as the patrician circles which at that period were called "society" in Boston. They consisted of people of culture and, in most cases, of wealth among whom pedigree and family connection counted for something, and who also respected public distinction if won in a manner not in conflict with the principles and opinions prevalent among them. The merchants and manufacturers belonging to them were highly honorable in their dealings, and public-spirited citizens. They lived generously without ostentatious display. Their dinners were excellent and their Madeira of impressive age and quality. They were far more virtuous than any old-world aristocracy, and their children grew up under the influence of a refined and highly self-respecting family life. There was something of the academic atmosphere of Harvard University pervading the region of Beacon Street where they lived. Their social intercourse was fastidiously confined to their own sets and to such distinguished strangers as might visit Boston. Of these Englishmen and Southern planters were the most welcome. From their neighbors they expected the consideration and deference due to a superior class. They were by no means democrats—nay, living in a democratic country they were constantly on the defensive against the intrusion of democratic

ideas, habits, and forces. With every advance of democracy they became more and more hopeless of the future of the American Republic, and loved to pour their griefs into the bosoms of English Tories. They looked upon social or political reformers threatening to disturb the existing order of things as visionaries, fanatics, and demagogues—persons that were not only dangerous but vulgar. In religion they were Episcopalians or Unitarians, in politics old-line Whigs, the protective tariff being to them the principal aim of government, the slaveholding South the most important customer, and Daniel Webster the most usefully serving political demigod. Principles and opinions adverse to theirs they met with a vigorous intolerance savoring of their Puritan ancestry, and, as a provincial aristocracy is apt to do, they punished them with social excommunication. The drawing room of Mr. George Ticknor, a late Harvard professor and author of a book on Spanish literature, was the meeting-place of the élite, and the highest court from which social judgment went forth.

While Sumner did not sympathize with the narrowness of mind prevailing in these circles, he was much attracted by their culture and good breeding, and highly valued their friendship. His law practice languished, and he drifted again into legal literature. Sometimes he gave way to a propensity which also in the greater endeavors of his later life occasionally became strongly marked—to indulge himself in a display of what may be called his mental bric-a-brac. As a friend wrote of him: "Nothing delighted him more than to write upon curious matters, throwing a flood of learning upon difficult points."¹² So he once composed a leading article on the law maga-

zines published in the United States, and finding that there were seven, he had more than a dozen pages upon the term "seven"—the "important and mysterious figure, playing distinguished parts in the world's history,"¹³—and to show this he quoted lavishly from literature ancient as well as modern, much to the astonishment of the readers of the "Law Reporter."

His principal work, however, was given to far more serious subjects. He took no active part and, in fact, no lively interest in politics. But now and then he discussed public questions as a publicist. Whenever slavery appeared as a topic, his moral instinct put him on the antislavery side. The first newspaper to which he subscribed was William Lloyd Garrison's "Liberator." It was the moral interest he took in slavery that gradually awakened in him an interest in the politics of the day. In 1842 he published some papers on the right of search in connection with the slave trade, and on the famous Creole case, in which upon antislavery grounds he dared to differ from Daniel Webster, then so high an authority in Boston society that to assail it was almost regarded as sacrilege. He then urged as his main point a principle to which he steadfastly adhered in all his later discussions of the general subject—that slavery was merely a local institution which nowhere could exist unless sanctioned by local law.

But at this period a feeling of profound despondency seized him. Seeing that some of his friends had at his age already achieved much success and distinction while he was still an almost briefless barrister and a writer of by no means uncommon reputation, and being full of high ideals which he had not been able to realize or

even to approach, he began to regard his past life as a failure and his future as barren of promise. His friends became alarmed at his morbid dejection—regarding it as the premonitory symptom of a grave illness. This illness came, indeed, when, having undertaken to edit Vesey's "Reports" in twenty volumes, Sumner taxed his working power to the utmost. A slow fever, rising now and then to intense paroxysms, utterly prostrated him. He was willing to die; gradually rallying he wondered why he was left to live; he would not be thankful for recovery as a deliverance, and he wrote to a friend: "For me there is no future either of usefulness or happiness."¹⁴ But the future which made him the champion of a great cause was then near at hand.

In 1845 the city government of Boston chose Sumner to deliver the customary oration on the Fourth of July. Although not yet known as a public speaker, he was regarded by many of his fellow townsmen as a man of much learning and uncommon accomplishments from whom an interesting address might be expected. He did not disappoint them. Many of his predecessors had devoted their efforts largely to a glorification of the war-like valor displayed by the revolutionary fathers. Sumner took for his theme the glorification of peace and its arts as "the true grandeur of nations." For many years he had thought much upon the subject and conceived a genuine moral abhorrence of war with its wanton waste and inhuman barbarities. This was the first opportunity he had for giving public utterance to what was with him a moral instinct, a matter of faith; and it appeared at once how such a faith could dominate his whole being.

His first delivery foreshadowed in every important feature the public life which followed.

The impression made by his personal appearance on that Fourth of July is still remembered. He was then in the full magnificence of his young manhood—six feet and two or three inches in height, broad-chested and erect, his strong-featured face and massive brow topped with a luxuriance of dark locks, his voice deep and resonant, not without gentle tones, but capable of a lion-like roar. His oration had all the characteristics of those of greater fame which were to follow. It was fashioned upon classic models; the lofty stateliness of its sentences sometimes bordering upon the pompous; its ornate imagery, its lavish affluence of illustration drawn from history and from literature, ancient and modern, carrying a slight flavor of pedantry, which was to grow stronger with age. But behind this there was the glowing force of an overpowering conviction, admitting of neither abatement nor compromise, and pressing forward with the unconsciously defiant courage, the naïve audacity, of a heart and mind perfectly honest and ingenuous. Here spoke a Puritan idealist.

His thesis was that "in our age, there can be no peace that is not honorable; there can be no war that is not dishonorable."¹⁵ And this extreme doctrine, utterly incapable, as it would seem, of strict practical observance "in our age," he elaborated and maintained, terribly in earnest as he was, in the directest, most unsparing language, without allowing any exception from it, without in the slightest degree extenuating its peremptoriness, regardless of traditional hero-worship or pride in ancestral achievements, regardless of the generally accepted

opinions of the world, regardless even of what might have been considered the proprieties of the occasion. For pains had been taken to make this celebration of Independence Day especially magnificent by military pageant. Not only had the militia companies of the city given splendor to the parade, but the finest of them formed part of the audience, the front rows of which were occupied by the superior officers of the state militia, the officers of the United States forces stationed in the forts near Boston, and the naval station at Charlestown, as well as the officers of the United States line-of-battle ship "Ohio" anchored in Boston harbor—all in the full glory of their glittering uniforms. There they sat, while the orator of the day thundered at them on the wicked barbarism of their profession, indulging even in contemptuous flings at the gay trappings of which the militia soldier is so proud, and showing in dollars and cents that the sums thrown away upon the construction and maintenance of so mischievously useless a thing as the warship "Ohio" would be more than sufficient to build up and support another such institution of learning as Harvard University.

The reception Sumner's speech met with was different in different quarters. The sons of Mars who sat among the hearers were restrained from an instantaneous outbreak of outraged dignity only by the moderate counsels of the older officers hastily whispered about. But their indignation found vent at the public dinner following the oration, in emphatic protests and ironical jeers which Sumner, utterly unconscious of having meant anything offensive to anybody, good-naturedly endured. The "best society" of Boston, too, pricked up its ears.

It began instinctively to suspect that this young man, who through his culture, his refined manners and amiability, not to speak of his social success in England, had become one of its pets, was after all not of it. It shrank from the extraordinary in him. He was still received, but with reserve and misgiving. And it is by no means improbable that when some time afterwards Judge Story died and his professorship in the Law School became vacant, Sumner was not seriously thought of for the succession because the daring radicalism betrayed by his Fourth of July address had shocked the conservative spirit of the Harvard Corporation in which the "best society" was of potent influence.

But outside of this circle the oration attracted wide notice. Some critics rejected it as the effusion of a visionary mind. Many of his friends, even, found its doctrines altogether too extreme and sweeping. Others, especially the most radical of the antislavery men and many of the clergy, lauded it to the skies as a new gospel. All admired its literary merit and its bold sincerity. It gave him far beyond the boundaries of his city and state a reputation as a man of thought and an orator of uncommon power. He also felt the charm of new faculties in himself, and the gloomy despondency which had long hung over him vanished with this inspiring experience. On that Fourth of July he had begun, in a manner strikingly characteristic of his mental and moral being, his career as a public character.

The people demanded to hear him again. Urgent calls for lectures came pouring down upon him from lyceum societies in New England which at that period

were not mere purveyors of amusement but a distinct and important agency of popular education; and the literary societies of colleges, Harvard among them, summoned him to deliver academic addresses. He took such occasions very seriously, as was his nature, always putting forth the best of his powers; and while he discussed a variety of subjects, he never failed to give to his discourses an ideal bearing upon the causes he had most warmly at heart—peace and antislavery—and also upon the leading topics of the time, such as the Mexican War and the problems rising from it. His reputation as an orator spread rapidly, even beyond the boundaries of New England; and wherever he was heard or read he soon acquired that peculiar fascination over the young and ardent which in his subsequent career became so important an element of his popular strength. This fascination did not spring from any exceptional originality or ripeness of thought, nor from any uncommon depth or subtlety of argument, nor from any superlative beauty of diction in what he said; but from the lofty nobility of his sentiments, the single-minded honesty of his beliefs, and the transparent genuineness of his enthusiasms. And as his reasoning and his appeals flowed from this source, so they always went straight to the most generous instincts and the noblest aspirations of human nature. There was absolutely nothing of the cynic in his composition. It was all pervaded and animated by an almost childlike earnestness. His very errors of judgment were those of the devotee at the shrine of the perfect, of the believer in the practicability of the ideal; and even his fondness for displays of learning, which sometimes appeared affected and ostenta-

tious, served only to ransack all history and literature for examples and lessons in aid of noble endeavors.

Such a personality could, indeed, hardly fail to impress and attract the intelligent and patriotic youth of the Northern States at a time when the existing political parties were constantly exhibiting a dreary inability to deal with the most momentous problem of the period, and when a great struggle was felt to be coming in which the moral and emotional forces of human nature were to play a decisive part. Nor is it surprising that under such conditions Sumner should, in spite of his former reluctance, have been drawn into active politics. He was nominally a Whig—not as if he had ever taken great interest in the “old Whig policies”—protection, internal improvements, a United States Bank—on which Henry Clay spoke so beautifully—but he rather belonged to the Whig party by personal association; and now he wished to see it, at least the Northern wing of it, become a political vehicle of the antislavery cause. This wish was fated to meet with stinging disappointments.

For the first time since the enactment of the Missouri Compromise a quarter of a century before, the slavery question became again the cause of general disturbance in American politics by the annexation of Texas which aimed at an increase of the number of slave states and a corresponding augmentation of their political power. There can hardly be any doubt that in the North almost everybody was at heart opposed to slavery. This sentiment sprang from a moral instinct which, as it more or less predominated in different persons, determined their attitude with regard to the slavery question. Those in whom it was sovereign became abolitionists pure and

simple, striving for the abolishment of slavery without regard to consequences. But with a majority of the Northern people this moral instinct fell under the influence of other considerations, commercial or political. There were those who would have greatly rejoiced at the quiet disappearance of slavery over night, but who, as persons interested in mercantile or manufacturing pursuits, saw in the South their best customer, and who feared a struggle against slavery as a great danger to their material prosperity. There were others who shrank from slavery as a great moral wrong and an economic evil, but who, whenever the slavery question assumed the shape of a critical contest, shrank from that too because it threatened to disrupt existing parties, to upset political arrangements involving the fortunes of leaders as well as followers, or even to tear the Union to pieces. The natural effect of this conflict between moral impulse and commercial or political considerations was that, whenever the slavery interest advanced a step towards the enlargement of its power, the anti-slavery sentiment of the North burst forth, irrespective of party, in displays of wrathful indignation bidding fair to overwhelm all resistance, but that when the slave power put on a menacing front, Northern people began to count the cost, and the decisive crisis was warded off by measures of compromise through which commercial and political interests saved themselves at the expense of ideal morality.

This was the policy of expedients which, as conducted by some of our greatest statesmen of that period, was certainly not devoid of patriotic motive and served to adjourn the decisive conflict until, excited by the

attempt of the slavery interest to invade all the territories of the Republic, the moral impulse of the North became determined enough to overrule all other considerations, and the North became also strong enough in men and means to go into the final struggle with an assurance of victory. At the time of the annexation of Texas the policy of expedients was still the order of the day. This measure stirred to high commotion the antislavery sentiment in both political parties, more, however, among the Whigs than among the Democrats who had then already in a great measure fallen under the mastery of the Southern wing of the organization. Especially in New England the waves ran high. Webster himself drew up a flaming address denouncing the "iniquitous project," and the conservative Whigs vied with old antislavery men in indignant protests. But when the annexation of Texas and its admission as a slave state had been actually accomplished, the Southern Whigs gave the signal of graceful submission and their conservative brethren in the North soon followed their example, discountenancing further discussion of the subject as useless and mischievous agitation.

But a strong force of "Young Whigs," headed by Charles Francis Adams, refused to cease agitation against slavery, and when, in consequence of the annexation of Texas and with an ulterior view to a further increase of the number of slave states, war was made upon Mexico—one of the most unjust wars ever waged—these Young Whigs, or "Conscience Whigs" as they were derisively called, denounced the supporters of it, especially those of the Whig party, with unsparing vigor and severity. Only two Massachusetts Whigs in Congress voted for

the war bill, and against one of them, Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, the very head of Massachusetts patricians, the most distinguished public man in the state next to Webster, Sumner directed his shafts. He went to the attack reluctantly at first, for his personal relations to [sic] Winthrop were most friendly, but then with the most intense asperity, and with that peculiar extravagance of rhetorical language, the offensive force of which, when it came from himself, he never was able to appreciate. "Blood!" he said in a public letter, "blood is on the hands of the representative from Boston. Not all great Neptune's ocean can wash them clean."¹⁶

Attacks like this could not fail to widen the breach between the "Conscience Whigs" on one side and the "Commercial" or "Cotton Whigs," as they were called, on the other, and to add to their controversies the poison of personal rancor. To Sumner they had a painful consequence. His profession of antislavery principles had seriously shaken his position in the best social circles, and in so harshly assailing Winthrop he had committed the unpardonable sin. George Ticknor solemnly declared him to be "outside of the pale of society,"¹⁷ and most of the houses, in which he had enjoyed the delights of refined social intercourse, were absolutely closed against him. He felt this keenly, for if any blandishment could have seduced him from the path of his public duty, it would have been the fascination of the intercourse with men and women of culture. But he deliberately made the sacrifice and did not swerve. He refused to support Winthrop as a candidate for reelection to Congress and the Whig press turned savagely upon him as a renegade. This, too, was to him a new and most

tormenting experience, but he resolutely went on. His activity in the contest became constantly more conspicuous. He drew reports and resolutions; he appeared in Whig conventions as the spokesman of his wing of the party; he delivered fiery speeches against slavery and the Mexican War, demanding the stoppage of supplies for it, and its immediate cessation; he openly declared himself against the support of any candidate for the Presidency who was not known to be against the extension of slavery "even though he have freshly received the sacramental unction of a regular nomination";¹⁸ and thus he not only made himself offensive to the old Whig party but increased the illwill of the "best society" of Boston to such a degree that old and valued friendships were turned into open enmity, and he was not only excluded from the leading families but fiercely repudiated and denounced by them,—when at last the crisis arrived that landed him on the stage from which his voice commanded the attention of the whole country.

In 1848, the Mexican War having come to a close, Mexico ceded by treaty to the United States, Upper California and New Mexico—territory stretching from Texas to the Pacific. This was the soil for the planting of new slave states which the slave power had coveted. But when the slave power stretched out its hand to seize that territory for its purposes, the spirit of the nineteenth century interposed. This interposition was indeed not effected by Congress, where the famous "Wilmot Proviso," an amendment to an appropriation bill, excluding slavery from the territories to be acquired, although repeatedly adopted by the House, had always failed in the Senate. But the discoveries of gold

in California attracted adventurous spirits from all parts of the country. Bent upon the rapid acquisition of wealth, they, even the Southern men among them, saw no advantage in slavery. The prevailing sentiment among the inhabitants of New Mexico, too, was against it. It began to dawn upon the slave power that the spoil of the Mexican War was eluding its grasp. But it did not give up hope.

Meanwhile the presidential election of 1848 came on. The Democrats nominated Lewis Cass, a "Northern man with Southern principles"; the Whigs took General Zachary Taylor, a Southern man without political ideas, whose record was purely military, and who by Southern Whigs was praised as a more trustworthy proslavery man than General Cass, while Northern Whigs labored to represent him as a Southern man with Northern principles. In both camps antislavery revolts broke out which in 1848 culminated in the famous Free Soil convention at Buffalo and the nomination of Martin Van Buren as the Free Soil candidate for the Presidency. Sumner took an active part in the campaign, made many enthusiastic speeches, won high praise as a popular orator and a popularity among the good country people, the clergy and the young men of his state which became of far greater advantage to him in his public career than the continued favor of the Boston society could have been. His position in the Free Soil movement was made still more conspicuous by his consenting, although he "disliked to see his name connected with any office, even as a candidate,"¹⁹ to lead a forlorn hope as a candidate for Congress in his strong Whig district, thus drawing the hottest fury of the Whig press upon him-

self and voluntarily accepting what humiliation there may have been in inevitable defeat.

The presidential campaign resulted in the election of General Taylor, and the Free Soil party turned out to be but a small body of men, strong enough only in a few states to affect the political situation. But they achieved successes out of proportion to their number. Holding with two votes the balance of power in the Legislature of Ohio they brought about the election of Salmon P. Chase to the Senate of the United States, just as even before the appearance of the Free Soil party in the presidential canvass, they had contrived the election of John P. Hale as a Senator in New Hampshire. In Massachusetts they were on the eve of a similar triumph.

The slave power, which had hoped to recruit its strength from the conquests of the Mexican War, met with a terrible disappointment. As a first fruit, California, having hardly become part of the Republic, applied for admission as a free state. The state constitution framed by a hastily called convention formally prohibited slavery. The slaveholders were almost frenzied by the frustration of their hopes. Many of them loudly threatened disunion if California were admitted as a free state and slavery excluded from the new territories. The disunion cry frightened Congress into a compromise. Henry Clay, a passionate lover of the Union, an antislavery man at heart, but as a slaveholder somewhat unappreciative of the moral sensitiveness of the Northern people concerning slavery, led the movement of conciliation. The compromise measures embodying the admission of California as a free state, the organization of territorial governments in the other territories taken

from Mexico without any prohibition of slavery, and a more stringent fugitive slave law, were such as could not do the slaveholding interest any good, but would prove a constant source of sentimental irritation to the North. Especially the new fugitive slave law making it the duty of Northerners to catch, or to aid in catching, run-away slaves that had escaped into the Northern States, was offensive to Northern sentiment. On the 7th of March, 1850, Webster spoke for the Compromise. By the antislavery people of Massachusetts, where Webster had been expected to take in the Senate the leadership of the opponents of the extension of slavery, the 7th of March speech was received as the fall of an archangel. They cried out with wrathful indignation at what they called Webster's apostasy; even the "Cotton-Whigs" could but slowly gather themselves up to the drop into line behind their revered leader. Throughout the country the Compromise of 1850 seemed actually to allay the excitement concerning the slavery question. The prosperous activity of business enterprise, stimulated by the streams of gold flowing from California, turned men's minds to material gain and blunted the edge of their moral sensibilities. With a self-delusion which appears inexplicable in the light of history, the Compromise was widely accepted as a final settlement of the slavery question. Many of those who had supported the Free Soil candidate for the Presidency of 1848, especially in New York, dropped back into the ranks of the old parties. In Massachusetts, however, more than anywhere else, the Free Soilers kept up their organization and their work, hardly anticipating the remarkable success they were soon to achieve.

In July, 1850, President Taylor died. Vice-President Fillmore, who succeeded him, took Webster into his cabinet as Secretary of State. The Governor of Massachusetts appointed Winthrop to fill temporarily Webster's place in the Senate. Webster's Senatorial term was to expire the year following. In the state election of 1850 the Free Soilers coalesced with the Democrats among whom, in Massachusetts, the antislavery sentiment had been strong. The coalition succeeded in preventing the election of a Governor which required a majority vote, and in electing a large majority of the Legislature. This Legislature then had to elect both the Governor and a Senator of the United States to succeed Webster's term. It was thereupon agreed that the Democrats should have the Governor, and the Free Soilers, whose principal aim was to see their antislavery views represented in the Senate of the United States, the Senator. The Free Soilers in caucus by a nearly unanimous vote nominated Sumner for the senatorship, and the Democrats in caucus, all but five, pledged themselves to vote for his election in the Legislature. George S. Boutwell, a Democrat, was then, by the combined vote of the Democrats and the Free Soilers in the Legislature, elected Governor. But when it came to the election of a Senator, more than twenty Democrats, led by Caleb Cushing, unexpectedly objected to Sumner on the ground that his antislavery principles were too extreme. Then followed a long and confused struggle.

During the campaign which preceded the state election some friends had held up before Sumner the Senatorship as a prize within his reach. But he could not hear of it, and certainly his speeches denouncing the

fugitive slave act with the most unsparing bitterness and virtually declaring that he would never obey such a law, had nothing of the circumspect caution of the candidate. Now he was a candidate in spite of himself. He doubted himself whether he desired the post. His "dreams and visions were all in other directions."²⁰ The prospect of spending his life in public position he "could not contemplate without repugnance."²¹ He was loath to give up his literary plans and aspirations. He suggested others as better fitted for the place than himself. But the Free Soilers demanded that he should stand, and he obeyed their bidding. The balloting in the Legislature, owing to the defection of more than twenty Democrats, went on for more than three months without result. Several times Sumner came within one or two votes of an election. The Whig and Democratic press assailed him with unprecedented fury and reprinted his speech against the fugitive slave law which had given such offense to the Democrats. Democratic members of the Legislature besought him to withdraw or modify only some of his utterances in that speech so as to give them a pretext for changing their votes in his favor. Ever so slight a concession in the way of recantation or pledge would have insured his success. But in vain. To all such entreaties he had but one answer: that the office must seek him, not he the office, and that it must find him an absolutely independent man.²² And finally it did so find him. On the 24th of April, 1851, he received the required majority of votes. Sumner, at Charles Francis Adams' dinner table, received the news with perfect equanimity and then hurried to the house of his friend Longfellow at Cambridge to get out of the

way of the jubilations of his friends, "more saddened than exalted."²³ His triumph had not weakened his distaste for political life, and he was seriously troubled "by the importance attached to the election."²⁴ For the event did indeed create a widespread sensation. There seemed to be a feeling throughout the country as if something extraordinary had happened. Nor was this without reason.

After a hot excitement about slavery the people at large seemed to have settled down into stolid acquiescence in the Compromise of 1850. Both the great parties agreed in setting it up as a fetish to be worshipped, and the prosperity of the country served to encourage the new idolatry. People bent upon the pursuit of gain were disposed impatiently to resent anything that would disturb them. To continue the agitation of the slavery question was denounced not only as untimely, but as unpatriotic. To question the sanctity of the new compromise, the fugitive slave law included, was considered little short of treason. A large number of Senators and Representatives in Congress issued a solemn manifesto pledging themselves to oppose the candidacy of any man of whatever party for President or Vice-President, Senator or Representative in Congress or in any state Legislature, in fact to excommunicate any man from political companionship, who would fail to sustain the Compromise and its rigid enforcement. Every officer of the federal government from President to tide-waiter, and every expectant of office in the opposition party, stood guard over the safety of slavery. Large public meetings of business men all over the land spoke in the same strain. Commerce, industry, speculative enterprise, political am-

bition, solicitude for the Union, all conspired to put down what there was left of the moral insurrection against slavery and to bury it under the Compromise. The antislavery men who could not be silenced appeared only a mere handful. At no time in our history did the North seem to be so completely on its knees before the dark idol.

Under these circumstances a political accident—for so we may call the coalition of Democrats and Free Soilers in Massachusetts, which a few months later would have become impossible—carried into the Senate of the United States a man who was the very embodiment of the moral insurrection against slavery in its boldest and austere form. In a letter congratulating him upon his election, Theodore Parker said: "You told me once that you were in morals, not in politics. Now you will show that you are still in morals, although in politics. I hope you will be the Senator *with a conscience*."²⁵ Parker's anticipation was to be more than justified. Sumner remained "in morals," and, in the ordinary understanding of the word, he never went into politics. He never had been, and never became, a politician of the managing, accommodating, conciliating, combining, organizing kind. The sense of political expediency was entirely foreign to him, and he never sought to acquire it. He knew of no other way to build up a party or a personal following than by convincing his fellow citizens of the righteousness of the cause he advocated. The use of patronage or the compromising of a principle for such a purpose was beyond his political conception. There is an error to which public men of high aims sometimes fall victims—the delusion

that they can meet the so-called practical politician upon his own field of low arts, overcome him with his own weapons, and thus aid great and noble objects by the employment of small and questionable means—a game which a high-toned man is generally inapt to play, and in which he is always defeated by the professional, sometimes not without a grievous abasement of his own character. Sumner never fell into this error. Ambitions of this sort probably never tempted him.

Neither had he the practical sense in dealing with men and things, which is usually acquired by those who have to work their way up from lowly beginnings by a rough struggle with adverse circumstances. In a remarkable degree he had been spared what may be called the ordinary vulgarities of life. His attempt to practise law had been that of an earnest student but of a diletante practitioner. The mountain tops from which he was known to look at human concerns were not attractive to clients. Men visited his law-office to discuss rather a public cause than a private case. He had remained essentially a student dwelling in an atmosphere of letters, there building up his ideals, and looking at the affairs of the world in the light of those ideals. And in that light almost every important question reduced itself to him to a question of morals. The "higher law" conception, which a strange freak of fate coupled to Seward's name, was so essentially a part of Sumner's nature that it governed all his political reasoning. It absolutely dominated his treatment of the slavery question.

As to the ultimate aim to be reached, he, of course, sympathized with the extreme abolitionists. But he

would not follow them in condemning the Union and the Constitution of the United States as mere instrumentalities for the preservation of slavery. On the contrary, he regarded the Union as a "blessed bond," and he believed that the abolition of slavery could be accomplished under the Constitution as he understood it. He read the Constitution "by the light of the Declaration of Independence"²⁶ and construed it as a charter of liberty in which slavery had absolutely no sanction. In later years he went so far as to affirm as the supreme rule of interpretation that "anything for human rights is constitutional";²⁷ and this was in fact his constitutional doctrine as to slavery from the beginning of his public career.

This, certainly, will not pass as the reasoning of a lawyer, nor as the conclusion of a historian. It appears rather as the utterance of a moralist determined to make everything bend to his conception of right and justice. Whenever any one endeavored to present to him "the other side" of the slavery question, he always promptly and sternly insisted that the slavery question had no two sides. As to the simple question of right and wrong, this was undoubtedly correct. As to the question of accepted constitutional law and the question of tactics in fighting slavery, it was not equally correct. Sumner not only refused to recognize any moral excuse for an argument opposed to his postulate, but he could never appreciate how far such arguments were apt to impress ordinary minds. Not to see two sides of a question was in him an element of weakness as to practical statesmanship, but it was an element of great strength in him as a moral agitator and a revolutionary character.²⁸ And

it was his high quality as both a moral agitator and a revolutionary character that constituted his significance in a period of our history the chief problem of which appealed in an eminent degree to the moral sense, and could not be fully solved without a resort to means of a revolutionary nature. If we call "revolutionary" all endeavors to change the structure of society or the political order upon principles not in accord with those of the existing political constitution, but asserted to be superior to it, Sumner may well be classed among revolutionary characters; for, while he would certainly have disclaimed such an appellation and doubtless believed himself to be faithful to the Constitution, yet he interpreted into it, by a logic all his own, all the principles by which he believed the moral world should be governed, and which, he thought, the fundamental law ought to, and must, embody. He was, unconsciously, seeking to revolutionize the Constitution in its own name.

In forming his conclusions he was but little swayed by contemporary currents of opinion. He would rather consult on questions of right or wrong the heroes of Plutarch than men living around him under the influence of the interests of the day. Also his oratory he would fashion rather upon the model of Demosthenes and Cicero than of the great debaters of modern times, and he seemed to think that any proposition or argument, however strong on its own bottom, would be doubly strong if supported by a quotation from some sage of antiquity, of which quotations he had an abundance at command.

Such a man was admirably fitted to impel and inten-

sify public sentiment in a period of emotional politics, and there could not have been a cause, nor a conjuncture of circumstances, more favorable to an effective exercise of his peculiar powers, than the antislavery cause and the situation in which it found itself at that time. It was a remarkable coincidence that Charles Sumner entered the Senate as the successor of Daniel Webster, and that on the very day when he took his official oath, Henry Clay, bent with age and illness, spoke his last words in the Senate chamber and left it never to return—the statesmanship of expediency and compromise departing, and the moral antislavery idea in its severest impersonation stalking upon the scene.

The Senate had then just passed its most splendid period. With Calhoun, Clay and Webster the old stars of the first magnitude had disappeared. Benton, too, was gone. There were some men of the same generation left, both Whigs and Democrats—heavy respectabilities, with a smattering of general knowledge, much official experience and practice in political shifts, traditional notions of policy untroubled by originality of thought, and an effluent supply of solemn commonplace. Younger men began to overtop them. On the Democratic side Douglas with his vigorous mind, his pushing political activity, his combative ardor and adroitness as a parliamentary pugilist, and his bold ambition, had made himself one of the most conspicuous figures in the political arena. On the Whig side Seward had in the debates on the Compromise measures greatly distinguished himself as an antislavery champion; and he was now seconded by Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, a man of little learning, but hard-headed and full of genuine Round-

head mettle. Salmon P. Chase, the Free Soiler from the same State, had made his mark as a man of the first order, and John P. Hale, of the same faith, from New Hampshire, although of lighter calibre, shone by his sparkling argumentative wit. On the whole there were but few in the Senate who rose above self-satisfied mediocrity.

The lull in the struggle about slavery following the Compromise of 1850 had permitted the tone of Senatorial debate and the personal relations between the antislavery Senators and those from the South to become tolerably pleasant. But the apparent peace was a mere armistice, a breathing spell, liable to be broken by the slightest disturbance of the so-called final settlement. In truth, the Southern mind was in a state of almost hysterical sensitiveness about slavery—not without reason, for all the agencies of modern civilization were conspiring for its overthrow. It was the fateful error of Southern men that they stubbornly refused to read the plain handwriting on the wall, and ascribed the whole trouble to Yankee meddlesomeness. The profitable cotton culture, which in their opinion could not be carried on without slave labor, had made them see in slave labor a great economic boon. From looking upon slavery as the source of their prosperity to persuading themselves that it was also a great moral blessing and the true foundation stone of democratic institutions was an easy step. Calhoun had furnished for all this the doctrinal formula. In the Bible, too, the Southern people found supreme sanction for it, and many of them believed as stoutly in the divine right of slavery as any Romanoff or Bourbon believes in the divine right of

kings. They saw in everything that threatened slavery—what they did not see was that everything threatened slavery—an attack on their rights as freemen, on their property, on their homes, on the fundamental conditions of their existence, and every serious demonstration of this sort would throw them, not unnaturally, into a frenzy of alarm and paroxysms of rage. This state of mind prevailing among the Southern people found not only a faithful but even an exaggerated representation in Congress.

Many Southerners, although men of otherwise generous impulses and fine social accomplishments, had fallen into the habit of affecting a lofty superiority over the Northern people in point of self-respect and personal courage, and on the floors of the Senate and the House they pleased themselves and their constituents in bullying and browbeating the opponents of slavery with a disdainful haughtiness bordering on the absurd. Attempts at intimidation took the place of argument, and many of the debates on slavery touched the extreme of virulence in language. This tendency had no doubt been encouraged by the occasional effectiveness of disunion threats as well as by the reluctance of Northern men to become parties to personal quarrels, which by the Southerners was taken for a want of spirit. In the Senate Seward had made it a rule utterly to ignore the insults directed against him. Chase had sometimes repelled them with proper rebuke but always in measured language. Hale had sought to turn them away by clever satire. But in Sumner the Southern hotspurs were to meet with a novel experience.

He was received in Washington with kind attention.

He soon established pleasant relations with the members of the diplomatic corps as a man of the world, and his acquaintance was sought by almost all the distinguished strangers visiting the capital. Even the slaveholders and their families met him with amiable courtesy, recognizing in him a cultivated gentleman. As he valued polite society, so he was appreciated by it. Still, at first he found neither the social atmosphere of Washington nor his occupations congenial. "As for me," he wrote to Longfellow, "farewell content! farewell the tranquil mind."²⁹ The foreboding was just.

His first speech in the Senate was on a resolution to welcome Kossuth. He paid a warm tribute of admiration to the great Hungarian chief, but did not permit his warm sympathy with the liberal movements in Europe to run away with his respect for our traditional policy of non-interference in foreign conflicts. Also on a revision and codification of the public statutes, on international copyright, on ocean postage he made short speeches and took part in the debates on various subjects to dispel the impression spread by his opponents that he was "a man incapable of public business, of one idea, and a fanatic."³⁰ On slavery he intended to speak toward the close of the session; but when week after week passed without a word from him on that subject, the Whig press began to taunt the "renegade" with want of courage, and many of his Free Soil friends grew impatient. The Southern Senators, moved by an uneasy presentiment, sought to prevent him from speaking; but a few days before the final adjournment of the session he forced his opportunity by moving an amendment to an appropriation bill, providing that no money

therein appropriated should be applied to the execution of the fugitive slave act, "which act is hereby repealed."³¹ This gave him free range.

In the opening of his speech he thus defined his position: "Whatever I am or may be, I freely offer to this cause. I have never been a politician. The slave of principles, I call no party master. By sentiment, education, and conviction, a friend of Human Rights in their utmost expansion, I have ever most sincerely embraced the democratic idea—not, indeed, as represented or expressed by any party, but according to its real significance, as transfigured in the Declaration of Independence and in the injunctions of Christianity. In this idea, I see no narrow advantage merely for individuals or classes, but the sovereignty of the people, and the greatest happiness of all secured by equal laws."³² He then affirmed in an elaborate argument that slavery can exist only by positive law, and that, as the Constitution nowhere recognizes property in man, slavery is only a local institution while freedom is national; that, as the national government is a government of delegated powers, and as among these there is no power to support slavery, Congress cannot in any way legislate in its behalf; that the fugitive [slave] act is unconstitutional as a usurpation of powers not granted by the Constitution, as well as because of its denial of trial by jury in a question of personal liberty and a suit at common law. But this argument served him only as a legal support of his forceful denunciation of the wrong of slavery in the light of justice, morals, humanity, religion, and patriotism, which he put forth in his stately phrase with a completeness of reasoning and a richness of historical illustration and literary

adornment seldom, if ever, heard in the Senate, and which culminated in this bold avowal as to the fugitive slave law: "By the supreme law which commands me to do no injustice, by the comprehensive Christian law of brotherhood, by the Constitution which I have sworn to support, I am bound to disobey this act. Never, in any capacity, can I render voluntary aid in its execution. Pains and penalties I will endure, but this great wrong I will not do."³³

The Southern Senators listened attentively. Most of them thought it politic to let this speech pass without reply; but some of them could not contain themselves. Clemens of Alabama remarked in characteristic style that "the ravings of a maniac may sometimes be dangerous, but the barkings of a puppy never did any harm";³⁴ and Badger of North Carolina declared himself prevented only by respect for the usages of the Senate from applying to Sumner "an appropriate epithet."³⁵ These outbreaks of ugly temper were, however, not accompanied by any serious attempt to refute Sumner's arguments. The amendment offered by him received, indeed, only three votes besides his own—those of Chase, Hale, and Wade. Seward was still Whig enough to shirk; and Hamilton Fish, the other Whig Senator from New York, voted with the majority. But Sumner's speech was nevertheless an event. Southern men called it "the most extraordinary language they had ever listened to." Chase said that it "marked a new era in American history when the antislavery idea ceased to stand on the defensive and was boldly advancing to the attack."³⁶ This was also the impression it produced on the country. It revealed a new power on the political

stage—a man who was not a politician, recognizing no party allegiance, insensible to party interest or party discipline, not a mere exponent, but the impersonation of the moral antislavery idea, an idealist marching straight to his aim, attacking, on the floor of the Senate, the “final settlement” fetish and defying the slave power and all its allied interests with an almost childlike audacity, impelled by the sincerest conviction, terribly in earnest, utterly insensible to fear, and placing the fight against slavery upon so high a plane that its defenders could not rise to him. From this time on Sumner was distinctly a leader, not of an organization, but of a public sentiment. The antislavery politicians could not always follow him in every point, but they felt themselves overawed by his uncompromising spirit, looked to him as the manifestation of the moral conscience of the people, and managed to move in his wake.

The presidential election of 1852 marked the highest triumph of a compromise policy. The two great parties vied with one another in declarations of devotion to the “settlement” of 1850 as a finality. The Whigs, whose candidate, General Scott, occupied an equivocal position, suffered a crushing defeat, and Franklin Pierce the Democrat, was elected President by a heavy majority. The Free Soilers, with John P. Hale as their candidate, issued from the contest apparently in a sorry plight. Their vote in the country, about 155,000, was only half of what it had been in 1848. The antislavery Democrats in New York had, almost in a solid body, returned to their old party fold, and even in Massachusetts the Free Soilers had lost more than one-fourth of their strength. Sumner, who had unwaveringly stood by the Free Soil

banner, felt keenly the discouragements of the situation, but his profound faith in the invincibility of his cause sustained his hope that it would soon have the support of a powerful organization. Seward, on the other hand, had remained a Whig, and wrote to Sumner: "Recent events are what were, or might have been, foreseen, and do not disturb me in the least. No new party will arise, nor will any old one fall. The issue will not change. We shall go on much as heretofore, I think."³⁷ This was written after the fatal defeat of the Whigs and less than two years before the springing up of the Republican party. It frequently happens in politics that the intuitions of the idealist turn out to be wiser and safer guides than the reckonings of the expert politician.

The short session of 1851-2 indeed passed without any stirring event. Peace was not disturbed, and Sumner could write to a friend: "On the floor of the Senate I sit between Mr. Butler of South Carolina, the early suggester of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and Mr. Mason of Virginia, its final author, with both of whom I have constant and cordial intercourse. This experience would teach me, if I needed the lesson, to shun harsh and personal criticism of those from whom I differ"³⁸—a remark almost grotesque in the light of what was coming.

The session of Congress which began December 5th, 1853, marked the turning point in American politics. It began in a dead political calm. As to the national government the Democrats were in well-nigh undisputed, and apparently unthreatened, possession of power. The bulk of what the election of 1852 had left of the Whig party as a national organization agreed with the Democrats concerning the slavery question in maintaining

the Compromise of 1850 as a "finality." The tariff question had been dropped by common consent. The two parties were, therefore, in substantial accord on all great subjects. Popular acquiescence in the Compromise seemed to be almost universal. The antislavery men who still agitated against it were denounced as pestiferous fanatics and disturbers. The slaveholding interest seemed to have achieved a decisive and enduring victory. There were only four Free Soilers in the Lower House of Congress, and two in the Senate—Sumner and Chase. Hale had lost his seat. Wade, while unswerving in his antislavery sentiments, still called himself a Whig. Seward was silent on the slavery question and appeared to relapse into old Whiggery. The Whigs had regained control of Massachusetts, and their newspaper organs clamorously demanded Sumner's resignation from the Senate on the ground that he was, as a Senator, but the creature of an accident and had no constituency.

Then Stephen A. Douglas introduced his Kansas-Nebraska Bill abrogating the Missouri Compromise and throwing open the national territories to the ingress of slavery, and all was changed as by enchantment.

At the first moment the public mind did not seem to grasp this aggressive stride of slavery in its full significance. But Chase and Sumner of the Senate and the four Free Soil members of the House published a flaming appeal to the public arraigning the proposed measure "as a gross violation of a sacred pledge; as a criminal betrayal of precious rights; as part and parcel of an atrocious plot to convert a vast territory, consecrated to freedom, into a dreary region of despotism, inhabited by masters and slaves."³⁹ Douglas assailed the signers of

the manifesto with furious vehemence; but the debate which followed served only to spread the alarm among the masses of the Northern people. Sumner, who contributed to this debate a speech of great strength of argument and magnificence of diction, achieved a triumph of great moment to himself. His colleague in the Senate, recently elected, was Edward Everett. He, too, after long uncertainty and hesitation opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; but by the side of his half-hearted utterances Sumner's reasonings and appeals had a ring of noble and vigorous manliness which captured the heart of Massachusetts. Not only the Free Soilers, but many of his former opponents among the old Whigs and Democrats in his State turned to him with admiration and pride. He was no longer the Senator without a constituency.

In the North the excitement spread rapidly. All over the country public meetings were held which resounded with denunciation of the great treachery. Three thousand New England clergymen sent to Congress a remonstrance against the "great moral wrong—exposing us to the judgments of the Almighty,"⁴⁰—and the pulpits began to pour forth a stream of antislavery sermons. But nothing could stop the fatal infatuation which pushed through the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. To the last Sumner stood in the foremost front of the opposition. In the night of the final vote in the Senate he spoke with superb force, predicting that this act would "fructify in civil strife and feud."⁴¹ About the same hour a riot was waging in Boston, provoked by the arrest of a fugitive slave, and a deputy marshal lost his life in the turmoil. Forthwith the spokesmen of the South in Washington charged Sumner with having incited the bloody deed by

his seditious language, although his speech could not have been known in Boston at the time, and he was openly threatened with violence. He soon convinced them that he was not the man to be frightened.

A petition to Congress arrived from Boston praying for the repeal of the fugitive slave law. It bore the signatures of many men who but recently had sworn by the Compromise of 1850 but had been taught by the Kansas-Nebraska Act that the era of compromises was gone. When the petition was presented in the Senate, Southern Senators denounced it fiercely. Sumner rose in its defense and repelled the assault with defiant spirit. Then the assailants turned upon him with almost unprecedented coarseness of vituperation, and in a furious personal debate of two days he stood at bay like a noble stag tossing with powerful antlers his pursuers into the air. To the question whether in obedience to the law he would help to return a fugitive slave to his master, he hurled back the answer: "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"⁴² He stoutly maintained that the Constitution, as he understood it, imposed upon him no such duty, and when again pressed with the question: "Do you recognize the obligation to return a fugitive slave?" he exclaimed: "To that I answer distinctly, No!"⁴³ The insolent thrusts made at Massachusetts and at him personally he repulsed with counterattacks of such skill, vigor, and dignity that the Southern fire-eaters, expecting to see all Northern men quail before them, stood utterly perplexed at such unheard of temerity of defiance. Some Senators seriously considered whether Sumner, because of his open refusal to recognize what they had held to be an obligation imposed by the Con-

stitution, should not be expelled from the Senate. The project was dropped when a private canvass proved that the required number of votes could not be obtained. But personal intercourse between Sumner and several Southern Senators ceased, notably Butler and Mason, of the cordial relations with whom he had but recently spoken with so much complaisance; and threats of violence against him became louder than ever. Sumner, undismayed, presented one petition against the fugitive slave law after another, never failing to accompany them with forcible remarks, and forcing their reference to appropriate committees.

His single-handed combat with the spokesmen of slavery in the Senate had greatly strengthened his prestige. When it was over, Chase said to him: "You have struck slavery the strongest blow it ever received; you have made it reel to the centre."⁴⁴ In the Senate he began to be feared as a dangerous antagonist in debate. And Massachusetts was delighted with him. Even old conservative men praised him as the worthy successor of John Quincy Adams in vindicating Massachusetts' principles and moral sentiments. Not only was he no longer the Senator without a constituency, but his people proudly called him "*the* Senator from Massachusetts." His speeches were read with enthusiasm at thousands of firesides. New England clergymen prayed for him and New England women spoke the name of their hero with rapturous admiration.

Sumner's position that the fugitive slave act had no force binding upon him, because, interpreting the Constitution as he did, he deemed it unconstitutional, may, as a general principle, no doubt be successfully attacked.

If the general rule were admitted that every man may deny his obligation to obey any law according to the opinion he may conceive as to the constitutionality or rightfulness of that law, civilized society would soon come to an end. Sumner himself seemed to recognize this when in his first speech against the fugitive slave act he declared himself ready to "endure pains and penalties" for disobeying it. But the fugitive slave act was one of those ill-starred laws in the breaking of which men of a high order of conscientiousness would see rather a virtue than a moral obliquity. Perhaps a large majority of Americans then living, when appealed to by a slave running for his freedom, would have felt it to be far more righteous to save him in violation of the law, than to return him to bondage in compliance with it. To force upon the North a law so repugnant to the most natural sympathies of the human heart was one of the most fatal blunders ever committed by the South, irrespective of the constitutional right in the case. Sumner's attitude, however assailable so far as it was to assert a general rule, no doubt corresponded not only with the moral impulses of the Northern people, but also with their impulse of pride—for they felt themselves summoned to do for the slaveholder what the slaveholder was too proud to do for himself. Sumner brought this out most strikingly in the debate, when he solemnly called upon any Senator "who would stoop to any such service,"⁴⁵ to show himself. He stopped for an answer, but there was deep silence, even among the "fire-eaters." In spite of this feeling the fugitive slave law was more effectively carried out in the North than the laws against the African slave trade in the South.

But when by the Kansas-Nebraska Act the Missouri Compromise was abrogated, all compromises lost their prestige, and the fugitive slave law, which had been defended mainly as a necessary part of the last compromise, fell into still deeper contempt.

The final breakdown of the compromise policy by the act of the proslavery compromisers themselves was bound to bear another fruit—the creation of a new political party responding to a new political condition. Earnest opponents of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise withdrew from the Whig and from the Democratic organizations and formed, together with the Free Soilers, the Republican party. In Massachusetts, as elsewhere, the new formation passed through the intermediate stage of the Know Nothing movement, whose proscriptive tendencies directed against foreigners Sumner most strenuously opposed, and which subsided after having performed the office of thoroughly disintegrating the Whig organization. The Republican party of Massachusetts at once recognized Sumner as its most prominent leader, and, promptly gaining control of the Legislature, it put into the Senate as his colleague Henry Wilson, the engineer of the coalition to which Sumner owed his seat—an ardent antislavery man, not of high statesmanlike qualities, but an upright, brave, and generous character, and in the better sense a politician of great activity and skill.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act brought the forces of freedom and slavery face to face for a fierce contest on the Western plains. As the South understood it, that act had been passed for the very purpose of making Kansas a slave state. To carry out this purpose legally, it was re-

quired that the territory be speedily filled with proslavery settlers in sufficient strength to outnumber and outvote the friends of free labor. But as a colonizer slavery could not compete with free labor in quickness of movement. It was certain that ten free laborers in light marching order would migrate into Kansas while one slaveholder could put his cumbersome column of slaves in motion. Once more the slave power saw the hoped-for prey elude its grasp. But it was resolved upon a desperate fight against fate. What it could not hope to accomplish by the votes of *bona fide* settlers, it tried to accomplish by means of force and terror. Bands of proslavery men from the neighboring slave-state Missouri, organized by Senator Atchison, the "border-ruffians," not unjustly so-called, crossed the Kansas line again and again when elections for the territorial legislature were to be held, took possession of the polls with arms in their hands, stuffed the ballot boxes full of fraudulent votes, and then recrossed the line again to hold themselves ready for the next occasion. This maneuver was to secure the double purpose of putting proslavery men in power and proslavery laws in force for the time being, and of frightening away by the terrifying violence of their proceedings free-labor immigrants, until a sufficient force of slaveholding settlers could be gathered on the soil of Kansas to make it in fact a slave state. But this plan was baffled by a very alert counter movement. Efforts were made in the free states to stimulate the migration of antislavery men for permanent settlement in the territory, and the famous "Emigrant Aid Society" formed in Massachusetts displayed the utmost energy to that end. Thus the temporary invasion

of Kansas by the border-ruffians with revolvers, bowie knives, and whisky-bottles was met by a permanent occupation of the territory by *bona fide* settlers from the North with ploughs, Sharps rifles and school books.

A confused struggle ensued marked with bloody outrages. The proslavery interest controlled the Legislature elected mainly by border-ruffian votes. The free state men called a convention at Topeka, framed a constitution prohibiting slavery, and applied to Congress for the admission of Kansas as a state. The stirring events in the territory, vividly reported and hotly discussed by the press, kept the whole country in excitement. The new Republican party, aided by what was still left of the Know Nothings, defeated the Democrats in the congressional election of 1854 and won a majority in the House of Representatives, which, after a bitter contest, elected Banks of Massachusetts Speaker. The House sent an investigating committee to Kansas, the majority of which in its report exposed the misdeeds of the border-ruffians, found the legislature elected by them an illegal body, and the free state men to be the *bona fide* inhabitants of Kansas and entitled to recognition as such. In the Senate a report was made by Douglas from the Committee on Territories which represented the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society as the cause of all trouble in the territory, and recommended that as soon as Kansas was shown to have a certain number of inhabitants, a constitutional convention should be called under the authority of the present legislature. But Seward introduced a bill to admit Kansas as a state under the Topeka Constitution.

An animated debate followed in which Douglas' skill

in obscuring actualities and in shifting issues shone more brilliantly than ever. But his adroitness as a debater could not overcome facts, logic, and moral law as they were forcibly set forth by Hale, whom the Republican current had swept back into the Senate; by Trumbull, whom the Republicans had recently sent from Illinois to be Douglas' colleague; by Harlan, the Republican leader from Iowa; by Wilson, from Massachusetts; and especially by Seward, who, having somewhat tardily passed from the Whig organization into the new party, now put forth his whole strength as a political philosopher. But, although their speeches were eagerly read all over the Northern states, none of them startled the country so much as Sumner's oration on "The Crime against Kansas," delivered on the 19th and 20th of May, 1856. It was one of those vast and elaborately ornamented rhetorical structures built after classic models, in which Sumner delighted, and he had himself announced it to a friend as "the most thorough philippic ever uttered in a legislative body."⁴⁶ The present generation would hardly admire its somewhat stilted style; nor did it then add much new material to the antislavery argument. But there was a power in the grouping and presentation of facts and arguments, an unsparing directness in his reasoning, a stinging force in his arraignments and denunciations of the crimes committed in behalf of slavery, a defiant boldness in his manner of calling things by their right names, and all this animated with a loftiness of moral sentiment and a fire of righteous wrath at a monstrous wrong, which fairly overwhelmed his adversaries and exasperated them beyond measure. As soon as Sumner closed, their anger broke

out in a storm of personal invective which Sumner repelled with undaunted vigor.

But the threats of violence hurled against him proved this time to be more serious than before. In his speech he had indulged himself in likening Senator Butler from South Carolina to Don Quixote devoted to "the harlot slavery" as his mistress Dulcinea, and Douglas to Sancho Panza. He had also made some severe remarks upon Butler's looseness of speech in debate and upon the conduct of South Carolina in the revolutionary war and her present impotence caused by slavery. Preston Brooks, a young South Carolinian occupying a seat in the House of Representatives, and a distant relative of Senator Butler, resolved to "punish" Sumner for the "libel on South Carolina and Mr. Butler."⁴⁷ Two days after the delivery of his speech, the Senate having taken an early adjournment, Sumner was sitting at his desk in the Senate Chamber absorbed in writing letters, when Brooks approached him unobserved and beat him over the head with a heavy cane until he lay on the floor covered with blood and senseless. The interference of other persons put an end to the assault. Sumner was carried away gravely injured.

A murderous attack upon a Senator of the United States, in the Senate Chamber, for words spoken in debate, was a portentous event and produced an immense sensation. Many of the antislavery men in Congress regarded the assault upon Sumner, together with the reasons given for it, as the beginning of a systematic attempt to put down all opposition to slavery by terror, and went well-armed with dirk and pistol to their chairs in the Capitol, from which they grimly eyed the

scowling Southerners who were certainly no less heavily-armed. The tension was increased when several Southern Senators and Representatives, Butler among them, in speeches on the floor loudly praised Brooks' conduct. In the slaveholding states, especially in South Carolina, the news of the assault upon Sumner called forth shouts of applause; and when a resolution, moved by a committee of inquiry in the House of Representatives, that Brooks be expelled received a majority (not, however, the two-thirds majority required for expulsion) and Brooks thereupon resigned his seat after a grandiloquent speech, he was promptly and triumphantly reelected by the people of his district; and as it once had "rained gold boxes" on Pitt, so a shower of "canes of honor" and silver goblets came down on Brooks from all parts of the Southern country for his "heroic deed" in vindication of the South and of slavery. No doubt there were Southern men, probably a good many, who disapproved of the act and had gloomy forebodings of its consequences, but their voices were drowned by the roar of the infatuated multitude.

In the North the news of the murderous assault on Sumner fell upon the minds of men like the booming of an alarm gun. Not even the outrages done by the border-ruffians in Kansas had aroused a deeper indignation. Massachusetts was in a blaze of excitement. The Legislature passed forcible resolutions. Fanueil Hall rang with the angry shouts of an assemblage composed not only of friends but of old opponents of Sumner—the Governor of the Commonwealth being the first of the speakers. Meetings were held all over the state and men like Longfellow, Felton, Sparks, Oliver Wendell

Holmes, and the elder Quincy, in spite of his eighty-five years, harangued their fellow townsmen. Even the gentle soul of Ralph Waldo Emerson broke out in fiery words of anger, and Edward Everett, timid and reticent as he was, denounced the outrage in burning phrase. The Governors and Legislatures of other Northern states vied with Massachusetts in stirring manifestations of feeling. There was hardly a town of respectable size in the North that did not have its public demonstration on the matter, and the sentiment put forth by an immense gathering in New York that "every blow which fell upon Sumner's head was an insult and injury to our honor and dignity as a people, and a vital attack upon the Constitution of the Union,"⁴⁸ found a thousand-fold echo. And when his injuries proved more serious than at first believed, and kept him away from the Senate, "Charles Sumner's empty chair" became by the side of "Bleeding Kansas" one of the most effective battle cries of the antislavery campaign.

In England the incident caused a profound sensation, not only with Sumner's many personal friends, many of whom were lavish in their expressions of sympathy, but with thinking men generally who saw in it the portent of a great conflict. "In any country but America," wrote Macaulay, "I should think civil war must be impending."⁴⁹ Others thought that with this blow civil war had actually begun. They were not far out of the way. The assault on Sumner was indeed a symptom of a distemper beyond the reach of the customary remedies. When two men fall into a dispute concerning an interest which each one considers of vital importance to himself, which each looks at and argues about from a point

of view so radically different from that occupied by the other as to become mutually unintelligible, and concerning which the breaking of one compromise has made further compromises based upon mutual faith impossible, then peaceable composition is at an end and nothing remains but a trial of strength. The American people were fast approaching this condition. It is true, the Democrats, the political allies of the South, still maintained themselves in power in several of the Northern states. But very many Northern Democrats were held in their party only by the belief that the practical operation of Douglas' popular sovereignty policy would be to exclude slavery from the territories or the new states, and that the organization of the Republican party upon distinct antislavery principles was, therefore, an unnecessary provocation of the South recklessly imperiling the Union. When now events occurred showing the South to be in dead earnest in seeking to make Kansas a slave state by force, in spite of the evident existence of a free-state majority among the *bona fide* settlers of the territory, the effect could hardly be other than to thin out the Democratic ranks, and to drive a large majority of the Northern people upon the Republican side.

The Southern argument, that the South needed an increase of her political power, and, therefore, more slave states in order to maintain the security of slavery in the Union, and needed the maintenance of slavery because it was the basis of her whole social and economic existence, and, therefore, not only a blessing but a necessity, was perfectly correct and logical from the Southern standpoint, but unappreciable to the normal Northern

mind. The Northern argument, that slavery was a hideous moral wrong and a social and economic evil, and that, while under the Federal Constitution it could not, in the states in which it existed, be attacked from the outside, the [institution] must at least be kept out of the territories which were the common property of the American people, was perfectly natural reasoning from the Northern standpoint, but unreasoning fanaticism and a malicious and wicked assault upon all that was dear to the South in the eyes of Southern people. The Northern argument, being that of nineteenth century civilization, could not fail to be immeasurably the stronger in debate; and when the slaveholding interest found itself in a situation growing constantly more critical, and assailed by an adversary whose arguments could not—at least not in the estimation of the world—be successfully repulsed by counterargument, the desire to silence it by threats or by force easily suggested itself to the hot temper of the Southerner. Mere threats had proved unavailing, and now force and violence succeeded them, first on the plains of Kansas where free labor and slavery struggled for the possession of a territory, and then in the halls of the national Legislature where slavery struggled to silence the voice of freedom.

There has been much discussion of the question whether Sumner did not provoke the assault by extravagantly violent language and thus furnished a justification, or at least an excuse, for it. In point of taste, Sumner's language was indeed very questionable. The humor of his comparison of Senator Butler to Don Quixote and of Douglas to Sancho Panza was somewhat elephantine and appeared like satire unrelieved by

grace. Neither was he fortunate in selecting Butler for a personal attack as a representative champion of slavery, while there were others fully as zealous and far more offensive in their proslavery championship; for Butler enjoyed a certain personal popularity as an old-style Southern gentleman, somewhat overbearing, to be sure, and believing in slavery as an unmixed good and in the South Carolina planter as a being superior to the rest of mankind, but withal of a generous and jovial nature, and fond of the classics as well as of the convivial cup. But when we measure the form and substance of the personal invectives in Sumner's speech by what has been considered admissible in parliamentary debate by the most renowned parliamentarians, they did not overstep the line. They certainly remained in point of acerbity and personal offensiveness far behind the brutal insults which had been frequently hurled from the proslavery side of the Senate at him and his political friends. The member of Congress in our days, who is far from squeamish in the selection of epithets when it comes to a personal altercation on the floor, would hold his breath if he were treated to the quality and quantity of scorn and vituperation with which the fire-eater of that anti-bellum time on every occasion deluged the opponents of slavery. But it was characteristic of that period that while the proslavery orators knew no bounds to the expression of their loathing for antislavery sentiments and antislavery men, every attempt on the Northern side to retort in kind, or only to assail slavery in vigorous terms, was resented by them with lofty indignation as unbearable insolence, like mutinous talk from a slave to his master. It was Sumner's bold and unsparing defiance

of this lordly assumption, it was this "insolence" that especially exasperated Southern men and marked him for "punishment." A candid inquiry into the facts and circumstances will convince anyone that the distant relationship between Mr. Butler and Mr. Brooks had very little to do with the motives for the assault. It was affronted South Carolina, the offended South, Mr. Brooks meant to avenge; it was the enemy of slavery he meant to silence. And so the South understood it. For this clearly expressed reason the act of Brooks received the enthusiastic commendation of Southern public meetings and of the Southern press. Indeed, some of the most influential Southern newspapers insisted that since the practice of "lashing" the antislavery men "into submission" had been initiated, it should be applied to all of them, especially Seward, who notoriously avoided in his speeches with the extremest care everything that might have sounded like a personal discourtesy. The defenders of slavery despaired of argument and resorted to force. This was, if not civil war itself, at least a prelude to it.

As soon as, after the assault, Sumner recovered himself sufficiently to think of the future, he, undismayed, wished to go back to the Senate in order to continue the struggle. But his injuries turned out to be much more serious than at first supposed. The slightest labor or excitement would bring on a feeling of exhaustion and distress. The spinal cord had been hurt by the blows on his head. His friends feared softening of the brain. He sought rest and strength at the seaside and in the mountains, but found only slight relief. Late in the autumn he visited Boston and was received with tremendous demonstrations of popular esteem and affection to

which he could but feebly respond. And when in the following winter the Legislature of Massachusetts was to elect his successor in the Senate of the United States, public sentiment, as reflected by the Legislature, showed itself so overwhelmingly in his favor that he received every vote in the upper and three hundred and thirty-three against ten votes in the lower house. The man who six years before had to go through a bitter contest of months, then to be elected by a majority of one, now was returned by virtually unanimous acclaim; and this, too, in the face of the uncertainty whether he would for years, if ever, be able to occupy his seat again. But his constituents were content to let that seat wait for him and in the meantime stand empty—that eloquent “empty seat,” preaching in its silence a most powerful antislavery sermon.

Sumner did, indeed, attempt to resume his duties in March, 1857, when, much against the advice of his friends, he went to Washington for the purpose of taking part in the vote on the famous tariff bill of 1857, he himself voting to reduce the duties on raw materials, especially on wool. But the strain of even this slight exertion became a torment, “the cloud began again to gather over his brain,”⁵⁰ as he expressed it, and a few days later he sailed for Europe to be gone several months. After many pleasant meetings with distinguished men and women in France and England, friends old and new, and more impatient to resume his work than assured of a permanent recovery from his hurts, he returned in November, and sat in the Senate, but soon found that he could do so only as a passive listener, and even this only under a painful strain. In April a severe

relapse came with alarming symptoms which convinced him that he must for the present give up all hope of activity and seek a thorough cure whatever sacrifice of time it might require. Again in May, 1858, he sailed for Europe, consulted Dr. Brown Séquard in Paris, submitted to a most painful treatment at his hands, became gradually able to enjoy his surroundings, and after an absence of eighteen months took ship for America again in November, 1859, believing himself cured. His faithful constituents, meanwhile, although he had repeatedly thought of resigning his charge because he could render them no service, would not listen to the suggestion so long as there was any hope of his recovery. They still were content that the seat in the Senate should wait for him—the “empty chair,” as eloquent as ever.

He had been absent from active duty three and a half years when he returned to it. Remarkable things had happened meanwhile. Preston Brooks had suddenly died less than seven months after the assault, having before he closed his eyes confessed to a friend that “he was sick of being regarded as the representative of bullies and disgusted at receiving testimonials of their esteem.”⁵¹ Senator Butler had gone to his grave a few months later. The new Republican party had made its first national campaign with Frémont and Dayton as its candidates. After a canvass carried on by the Republicans with extraordinary enthusiasm, they were defeated, the Democrats carrying the whole South except Maryland, and of the free states Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, and California. But that so young a party as the Republican, one, it might be said, improvised for a special purpose, should at the first onset have come

so near to victory, was a remarkable proof of vitality and pointedly foreshadowed the future period. Indeed, the new President, Buchanan, had hardly become well-established in the White House when the Democratic party, to which he owed his election, was torn to pieces by an internecine conflict.

The struggle in Kansas had gone on with constantly increasing virulence. The proslavery party, determined to hold its prey but growing desperate as it saw the chances turning against it, staked all its fortunes upon a last attempt to force upon Kansas a proslavery constitution—the famous Lecompton Constitution, framed by a convention in the election of which the free state men had taken no part. This constitution was submitted to a popular vote in so dishonest a manner that, whichever way the vote went, the constitution would be adopted and with it a certain sanction of slavery. The free state men in Kansas resolved to keep clear of the manifest swindle and to refrain from voting. The proslavery men, voting alone, accepted the constitution with slavery, and President Buchanan, having thrown himself completely into the arms of the slave-holding interest, recommended the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, declaring Kansas to be as much a slave state as Georgia and South Carolina.

This was too much even for Douglas. To accept the Lecompton Constitution as the rightful constitution of Kansas would have been to abandon the last pretense of sincerity as to his popular-sovereignty doctrine, and to destroy him utterly in Northern opinion. He loudly protested that the people of Kansas must have a free and fair vote on their constitution, and with this protest he

made the proslavery interest, and the administration controlled by it, his mortal enemies. The struggle between Douglas at the head of the bulk of Northern Democrats and the proslavery leaders with the South and the Administration at their backs grew so hot that many Republican leaders, especially in the East, thought that Douglas was fighting their fight, and, his senatorial term being near its close, favored his election to the Senate. Sumner, profoundly distrusting Douglas, was of a different opinion, and the Republicans of Illinois put an end to the scheme by pitting Abraham Lincoln against Douglas as their candidate for the senatorship. Then occurred that famous debating tournament of 1858 which made Douglas Senator again and put Lincoln on the road to the Presidency.

When in December, 1859, Sumner took his seat in the Senate again, strong enough to remain, Kansas was substantially in the power of the free state men. They controlled an incontestable majority of the popular vote, and in the legally elected Legislature. The Leecompton Constitution being submitted to the people again, and this time fairly, was overwhelmingly rejected. The territory would have been then admitted as a free state but for the proslavery majority in the Senate, who persisted in obstruction although they had to acknowledge themselves baffled as to the acquisition of new slave states in the West and were looking to the annexation of Cuba while secretly plotting for secession. Sumner's surroundings in the Senate had greatly changed. Instead of the infinitesimal minority of three, with which he had begun his senatorial career, there were now twenty-four Republicans by his side, not a few of them men of

eminent ability. Their social intercourse with the pro-slavery Senators had entirely ceased. The diplomats were nervously careful not to invite them together to dinner. Even Douglas' turn had come to be called "traitor," and "renegade" and "abolitionist" by his former friends from the South. The tension between the two sections became more and more unbearable as the final crisis approached.

On April 23rd, 1860, the Democratic National Convention assembled at Charleston, South Carolina, and after a long and bitter struggle between the adherents of Douglas and the Southern extremists, in the course of which the Southern men asked those from the North substantially to affirm that slavery was not wrong but right, the convention split, the Southern part of it to meet again at Richmond a short time after where they nominated Breckenridge for the Presidency, and the Northern part to meet at Baltimore on June 18th where they nominated Douglas. The Republican National Convention met at Chicago on May 16th and chose Abraham Lincoln for its candidate.

The sore disappointment of some of those who had hoped for Seward's nomination was soon appeased, and the Republicans stood united and inspired with high hope against a helplessly divided Democratic party. While these things were in progress a protracted debate occurred in the Senate on a House bill to admit Kansas with a free-state constitution. Sumner availed himself of this opportunity to resume his attack on slavery which had been interrupted by his long illness. As the champions of slavery in Congress had in the meantime with bolder directness maintained that slavery was an un-

mixed good, the normal condition of human society, an ennobling influence, the true basis of republican institutions, and so on, Sumner proposed to exhibit slavery as the reverse of all this, a hideous monster, unfit to be tolerated even in remote contact with civilized society. He entitled his oration "The Barbarism of Slavery." His arraignment of all the wickednesses and villainies of the system in its essence as well as its effects, immediate and remote, was so searching, and his denunciations so mercilessly positive and unqualified, as to leave no other conclusion than that slavery should not only be excluded from Kansas and the other territories, but that it should be killed like a poisonous reptile or a mad dog wherever found.

This speech, during the delivery of which some of Sumner's friends were sitting near him with pistols under their coats to protect him from violence, elicited at the moment only from a South Carolina Senator an outburst of personal invective which might have passed as an illustration of the very barbarism under discussion. But Sumner had pushed the antislavery offensive so decidedly beyond the line until then held by the Republican party in its official utterances that not a few of his Republican colleagues feared the effect. They doubted "whether such a speech might not inflame the hostility of the enemies of freedom more than the enthusiasm of its friends,"⁵² and whether it would not turn away from the Republican ranks many conservative and timid souls. They were mistaken. As it often happens, the politicians trembled, but the people received the moral inspiration of a bold utterance with joy. They were in their sentiments and their courage far in ad-

vance of the party managers. Sumner's speech was printed in innumerable copies and became one of the most popular and most effective electioneering documents in that memorable presidential campaign.

Lincoln was elected, but the Republicans had hardly had time to exchange congratulations on the first antislavery victory in a national election, when the scene changed with startling suddenness. Southern men had uttered loudly and often the threat of disunion in case the antislavery movement should continue. Civil war had been volubly spoken of as a possible consequence. But most people had looked upon this threat as a mere bugaboo to frighten children. In the North it was thought that the South *could* not fight on account of slavery; and the Southern people believed that the North *would* not fight for want of spirit and of united purpose. But now the secession movement in the South actually did follow the election of an antislavery president, and the spectre of civil war all at once acquired an appalling reality. There was general consternation. The trade of Northern merchants and manufacturers with the South stopped. Northern creditors trembled for the debts due them in the South. Stocks tumbled in Wall Street. Banks staggered on the verge of insolvency and severely curtailed their loans. Money became fearfully stringent. Universal bankruptcy and ruin seemed to be at hand. The Northern people were bewildered by the gloom of the prospect. Democratic politicians, rising up from their defeat in the presidential election, vociferously charged the Republicans with the responsibility for the impending disaster. Some of them openly espoused the cause of the Southern revolutionists and

affirmed the right of secession. Others insisted that, in order to save the Union, any concession should be made to pacify the justly exasperated South. "Union meetings" were held all over the North, in which such concessions, substantially surrendering all the principles the Republican party stood for, were vehemently demanded. Not a few Republicans would have recalled their votes for Lincoln had it been possible. Republican leaders, who but a few weeks before had been the heroes of the day, were frowned upon and violently denounced as mischievous fanatics. In Boston an anti-slavery meeting was broken up by a mob of which respected businessmen formed part. In Philadelphia George William Curtis was refused a hall for delivering a lyceum lecture because of his prominence as an anti-slavery man. Sumner himself, but yesterday the popular idol of Massachusetts, was notified by a prominent Boston journal that the people would no longer listen to his "empty platitudes,"⁵³ and his name was received with groans and hisses at a meeting of working men.

The seat of the national government presented a spectacle hardly more encouraging. Several of the members of the cabinet sympathized with the seceders and gave them active aid. President Buchanan declared that while no state had a right to secede, the federal government had no right to coerce into submission a state attempting to secede. The department teemed with "rebel sympathizers." The government seemed to be paralyzed. Its vitality was somewhat restored by the departure of the Southern cabinet ministers, who openly joined the seceders, and the substitution for them of Northern Union men. Among the Republican members

of Congress, too, there was much wavering and hesitation. Some were merely flustered by the panic among their constituents. Others thought themselves that the Union might and should be saved by concession and compromise and groped blindly about for schemes of conciliation—at their head Seward, who had been considered one of the most radical of the antislavery leaders. But a large majority of the Republican Senators, among whom Sumner stood conspicuous, held resolutely fast to the principle that the will of the majority legally expressed must be obeyed.⁵⁴

The question whether it would have been good statesmanship to ward off disunion and civil war by some sort of concession on the subject of slavery has been earnestly debated by politicians as well as historians. The affirmative can hardly be maintained. We know now, and every well-informed man knew then, that the leaders of the secession movement were determined not to accept any compromise. They had made up their minds to cut loose from the Union absolutely and forever, and to provide for the continued existence of slavery in an independent political organization designed for that very purpose. Their policy was perfectly logical. The preservation of slavery being their object, they had to withdraw from a partnership in which slavery was constantly exposed to the action of powerful influences hostile to it. That slavery would at last have to succumb in the nineteenth century, in spite of any efforts to protect it, they did not see. But it would certainly have a chance of longer life in a commonwealth under the undisputed control of slaveholders. And the leaders who for such reasons were resolved

upon secession had, in the states first seceding at least, an effective majority of those active in politics behind them. There was, therefore, not the slightest prospect of bringing them back to their old allegiance by any offer of concession.

But even if there had been such a prospect, a compromise would, at that time, have been utterly inadmissible for a reason of a different kind. The peace and order of a free state and the very existence of republican institutions depend upon the ready submission of the minority to the will of the majority legally manifested. Whenever this submission ceases to be a matter of course, whenever it has to be bargained for after an election by concessions to a minority in revolt, whenever the minority is thus permitted to substitute itself for the majority by force, or by threats of force, the government of law is at an end and the reign of revolutionary intrigue and violence begins. To purchase the submission of the South to the election of Lincoln by *any* compromise, however innocuous in other respects, would have amounted to the surrender of the fundamental principle of republican government. Such a policy, resorted to for the purpose of averting one civil war, would, as a prolific precedent, have brought an endless succession of civil wars upon us. In point of statesmanship no policy could have been more short-sighted.

It has been said that it was advisable, at that critical period, at least to show an *apparent* willingness to offer a compromise, thus to encourage and strengthen the friends of the Union in the South and to prevent the further growth of the secession movement especially

in the northernmost of the slave states, if it were only until the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President should have been effected—in other words, to gain time by a trick of diplomatic dissembling, the dishonesty of which would have been excusable so far as the end would justify the means. Of this dishonesty, however, the compromisers must be pronounced guiltless, for they were, no doubt, sincere in their purpose. But had the whole Republican party, as the compromisers wished, taken such an attitude, the situation would have become perilously complicated in two directions: the South would have been more than ever deluded with the belief that the North had no courage, and the Northern mind might have become disastrously confused and demoralized by the impression that compromise was the only legitimate remedy for the evils to be dealt with, and that any other was to be shunned as unrighteous. In every aspect of the case the American people have reason to be thankful that all attempts at compromise failed. Those were right who with calm fortitude insisted that “the Constitution needed to be obeyed, not amended.”

Sumner's judgment of the situation was entirely governed by his moral instincts. He indulged in no illusions as to what would come. He predicted that all the slave states except Maryland and Delaware would be swept into the revolutionary whirl, and that a long and bloody war would follow taxing the resources and energies of the North to the utmost. As a devotee of peace he deeply deplored the necessity of such a conflict; but, it being a war against slavery, he accepted it with grim submission. He never doubted the final result. With

devout faith in the moral law of the universe, he looked forward to the certain triumph of the national cause and of human freedom. The panic among his constituents, resulting in a petition for compromise signed by twenty-thousand citizens of Massachusetts, did not disturb him in the least. His great anxiety was that others be not disturbed. He discreetly abstained from speaking at length in the Senate, "for," he wrote, "such a speech as I should make would be seized by the conservative press, and be made the apology for the conduct of the slave states." But by word and letter he unceasingly implored his Republican friends to stand "firm, FIRM, FIRM!"⁵⁵

The arrival of Abraham Lincoln in Washington, February 25th, 1861, put a stop to the schemes of compromise. He saw clearly that to yield now any of the fruits of the antislavery victory would have been worse than to have suffered defeat. He came to Washington simply to occupy the place assigned to him by the people, not to trade for it. He was inaugurated as President; enough Southern men withdrew from the Senate and joined the rebellion to reduce the Democrats to a minority in that body, and then the whole national Legislature as well as the Executive were in the hands of the new antislavery party. Sumner, the most implacable member of the opposition, found himself suddenly transformed into a member of the majority. The fierce antislavery champion, now occupying a high position in the ruling party, and made Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, had to take upon himself a large share of responsibility for the con-

duct of the government in a terrible crisis. And here began a new chapter in his career.

At the period when the Republican party took the helm of affairs, Sumner was decidedly the most conspicuous figure in the Senate. There were very many able men among his colleagues, but none of them had, as much as he, struck the popular imagination. Visitors of the Senate Chamber would ask their neighbors in the galleries first to point out to them Charles Sumner. They saw in him something peculiarly superior to the common. He had then reached his fiftieth year. The romantic charm of his martyrdom was still fresh. His imposing stature and massive head, with features somewhat recalling those of Burke, the courteous gravity of his demeanor, his evident self-respect, his constant attention to the business on the floor, the commanding tones of his voice and the stateliness of his language—all this personified in him the ideal of senatorial dignity; and nobody cherished a higher ideal of that dignity than he. To his mind the Senate of the United States was the most august lawmaking body in the world, unequalled in grandeur and importance even by the Roman Senate in its palmy days; and the honor of being one of its members he respected in himself. This was with him not a matter of mere outward appearance, but of character. His personal and official integrity stood so high above all suspicion that even the bitterest spirit of partizan hostility never dared to question it. Whatever criticism his constitutional doctrines or his views of policy may have called for, nobody ever doubted the sincerity of his convictions or the disinterestedness of his motives. Never was there a calculating thought in

his mind as to how the utterance of his opinions might affect his fortunes as a public man. Without the slightest hesitation he would set his convictions of right and duty against any adverse current of sentiment in his party, or among his constituents, or even among his intimate friends. He would have considered it a desecration of his high office to descend to any of the arts of the demagogue or the wirepuller, for the purpose of strengthening his personal following; nor would he ever solicit any one to vote for him when his seat in the Senate was at stake. In every sense he towered grandly above the ordinary run of politicians.

He was, indeed, blamed for being inaccessible, dogmatic, haughty, and vain. This charge, which had some truth in it, pursued him all through his public life. Inaccessible he was by no means; on the contrary, every visitor found his door open. He permitted even his patience to be most severely tested. But while he kindly received everybody, there was nothing in his mien or discourse to invite familiar approach. Nobody would ever have felt himself tempted to slap him on the back or to call him "Charley." He relished friendly social intercourse but lacked that spirit of boon companionship which easily enters into other people's tastes. Although fond of conversation, he did not possess the facile art of small talk. He detested everything broad or obscene in allusion or anecdote. When at his own table a guest began a story with the words: "I suppose I can tell this, there being no ladies present"—Sumner impulsively interjected: "But there are gentlemen present"—a remark which for a moment embarrassed all present but himself. Nobody ever heard an unclean word pass

his lips. He instinctively shrank from all vulgar association. Emerson called him "the whitest soul"⁵⁶ he had ever known.

He naturally preferred to speak on serious subjects because only on such had he much to say. And as is common with all those who are possessed by an idea and are greatly in earnest, he was apt to assume a magisterial tone when his speech turned upon the things he had most at heart. Then, indeed, he did grow dogmatic, and this tendency increased as he became more accustomed to see his party friends at first reject his extreme positions and accept them afterwards. This is an experience the effect of which but few can withstand. It cannot be denied that he entertained a high opinion of himself, which his intercourse with his colleagues, most of whom were much his inferiors in knowledge and culture, as well as in moral courage, was calculated constantly to foster. And as such consciousness of superiority cannot entirely be concealed by an ingenuous character incapable of dissembling, it sometimes gave offense. He was fond of astonishing his audiences, private or public, with displays of his learning, and he keenly enjoyed appreciation and praise. Every scrap of eulogy he found in the press or in his correspondence he treasured—together with criticism of a different kind—as documentary evidence of historic value, and he would speak of the approbation he had won with childlike relish. His intimate friends regarded this as amiable naïveté; his unfriendly critics magnified it into a serious reproach, and the general public gradually accepted the impression that Sumner was a very vain man. But vanity is one of the most common of

human frailties, and one of the most harmless, too, if it stops short of a jealous depreciation of the merits of others. And no man could be more sincere, generous, and hearty in the recognition of other people's accomplishments, exploits, and virtues than Sumner. Envy was utterly foreign to his nature. His pride had no element of meanness in it. His self-esteem was magnificent, but it was that self-esteem which is a safeguard against any temptation to do a base thing. He had a high opinion of his importance in the world; but that opinion never permitted him to trifle with any public interest in his keeping. There were many politicians inclined to magnify the weaknesses of a character the great features of which embarrassed them as standards of comparison.

As soon as the Senate passed under Republican control, the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations fell to Sumner as a matter of course, he being recognized by all his colleagues as unquestionably the fittest man for it in point of character as well as equipment. History and international law had been among his favorite studies. He had seen the great world, and he enjoyed the acquaintance of not a few of the leading statesmen of Europe. With some of them, especially Englishmen of high and influential position, he was in friendly correspondence. He was conversant with diplomatic forms, usages, and proprieties. Nobody in the Senate could speak on foreign affairs with such authority, and nobody's authority was more trustingly accepted. Next to the advancement of the antislavery cause, he had no object more nearly at heart than the maintenance of an honorable friendship with foreign nations.

The two members of the government with whom his

interests and duties brought him into most frequent and important contact were Lincoln and Seward. There could hardly have been two public men of distinction more unlike in breeding, culture, mental and moral discipline, habits, and views of life than Sumner and Lincoln. They were nearly of the same age, Lincoln two years older. But while Sumner had grown up in the atmosphere of a well-bred Boston family, and had been studying the classics, and history, and languages, and literatures, and law in the Latin School and at Harvard, and enlarged his views and built up his ideals and elevated his aspirations by mental intercourse with the heroes and sages of antiquity and by social contact with the distinguished men and women of our time in the old as well as the new world, Lincoln had begun life in the wretchedness of the backwoods, earned a precarious subsistence as farm help, a country store clerk, a Mississippi flatboat-hand; had led a company of country roughs in the Black-hawk war; had read Aesop while crouching on the dirt floor of a log cabin, and Blackstone sitting in a fence corner; had studied politics in the village tavern and in the Illinois Legislature, and formed his principles and gathered his knowledge of men and things in his constant communion with the plain people and through a rude struggle with adverse fortune. By roads so different they had both reached eminence, and now they met in the service of the same cause on the same field of action, the one a man of high culture, fixed and peremptory in his views and purposes, accustomed to take and maintain his position on principles and policies with uncompromising positiveness, no matter whether public opinion was ready to follow him or not;

the other still somewhat rustic in his habit and speech, in sympathetic fellowship with the plain people, constantly mindful of their ways of thinking, their prejudices, and their beliefs and feelings; always anxious, in every forward movement of policy, to remain in supporting contact with the popular mind, slow in forming conclusions, but, conclusions formed, equally firm of will.

It may have seemed doubtful whether two such men could advantageously work together. But both being sincere men they soon met on a footing of mutual confidence. Indeed, Lincoln's whole being was so very unlike Sumner's ideal of a statesman and a ruler, Lincoln's homely humor and quaint forms of speech differed so widely from what Sumner would have thought a fit vehicle for a statesman's wisdom, and Lincoln's cautious deference to the movements of public opinion was so unintelligible to Sumner's forceful and impatient nature, that Sumner never was able justly to appreciate the metal of Lincoln's character and the rare quality of his gifts. Lincoln, as a keen observer, undoubtedly noticed this; but it did not disturb him in the least. It was one of the peculiar elements of strength and greatness in that seemingly untutored son of the Western prairies that he never stood in awe of any man. He was not one of those rulers, who, for fear of risking their mastery or prestige, think it necessary to surround themselves with persons inferior to them. He called to his side the very first among the Republican leaders without any nervous dread of being overshadowed. He highly respected their counsel but weighed it by his own judgment. He frankly yielded to them when he saw the greater wisdom on their side without any loss of self-reliance, and without

in the least apprehending that, if he gave them their full measure of credit, it might imperil his own. He possessed another quality—a virtue it might be called—of inestimable value to a man in power. He never permitted an honest difference of opinion to ruffle his good temper or to cloud his personal relations with those differing from him. His ear remained always open to adverse argument and his hand was always outstretched to all who were willing to grasp it, and not seldom even to those who hesitated. Of all this his relations with Sumner furnished a striking illustration.

Fort Sumter was fired upon; Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for volunteers; the Northern people rushed to arms, and Sumner, the champion of universal peace, having at last found a war that was “necessary, just, and honorable,”⁵⁷ spoke fiery words of encouragement to Massachusetts regiments marching to the front. But his greatest anxiety was that the edge of the war be speedily turned against the life of slavery. Incessantly he urged in speech and letter that slavery was the real enemy and that its destruction would be the end of the rebellion. On every occasion he entreated Lincoln from the very start boldly to avow the policy of emancipation, which would throw the slave power into confusion and secure to us the sympathetic support of the moral sentiment of mankind. No doubt, Lincoln at heart agreed with him as to the consummation devoutly to be wished. But in the practical treatment of the question there appeared the characteristic difference of the two men—Sumner hardly able, and perhaps even not always quite willing, to understand how on a matter involving a vital principle other people could fail to see things as

he did, and pressing forward whether they did or not; Lincoln painfully aware that many other people did not think as he did, and that he needed the cooperation of many of those very people for the accomplishment of the very ends that both he and Sumner hoped to reach. There may have been moments when Lincoln grew somewhat impatient of Sumner's urgency, and Sumner still more impatient of what he considered Lincoln's tardiness. But the two men instinctively trusted one another's honesty of purpose, and their relations were best defined by Lincoln's quaint saying: "Mr. Sumner, you are only six weeks ahead of me."⁵⁸ Six weeks did, indeed, not cover the difference, but as to the blow to be struck at slavery, it was after all only a difference in time.

Sumner was to learn by experience that a great many other people, warm antislavery men too, were six weeks and more behind him. At the Republican State Convention of Massachusetts which met in October, 1861, he made a speech boldly unfolding his theory. "It is often said," he argued, "that the war will make an end of slavery. It is surer still that the overthrow of slavery will make an end of the war."⁵⁹ He quoted John Quincy Adams' authority to show that the war power included the power to liberate slaves. He called for an edict of emancipation as a necessary and constitutional act, declared himself ready to favor compensating loyal owners for their liberated slaves, for "never should any question of money be allowed to interfere with human freedom,"⁶⁰ and hinted at the employment of negroes as soldiers. The speech received thundering applause, but its sentiments found no place in the platform. The war

policy he foreshadowed was, indeed, subsequently adopted; but when he spoke the public mind was not yet ripe for it. Not a few sound antislavery men, while approving his doctrine, doubted the timeliness of its public promulgation. The more conservative part of Sumner's constituency even assailed him with excessive virulence as an unreasoning fanatic and a dangerous breeder of mischief, and they actually hoped, by keeping up a hot warfare upon him, to deprive him of his seat in the Senate. Sumner, nothing daunted, continued his advocacy of emancipation, at which, although it apparently involved a criticism of the Administration, Lincoln was by no means displeased. On the contrary, he rather favored such an agitation as an efficacious means of preparing the public mind for the adoption of a policy corresponding to his own principles, desires, and hopes. Thus, while differing from Sumner as to the possibilities of the time, Lincoln constantly and very attentively listened to him as the spokesman of the antislavery conscience, and far from blamed the agitator who pleaded for what was inevitably to come. It did come in the natural course of events. In less than six months after that Republican Convention in Massachusetts Lincoln sent to Congress his message recommending to the slave states the gradual abolishment of slavery with pecuniary aid from the United States; and less than a year after it came out the announcement of the great decree of emancipation. At the expiration of his senatorial term, Sumner was reelected by a vote of five to one.

Second only to the destruction of slavery the maintenance of an honorable friendship with foreign nations, especially with England, was the cause nearest to Sum-

ner's heart, and his position of authority in the Senate gave him in all things concerning foreign affairs a potential voice. Upon this field he had to work with Seward, the Secretary of State.

Seward's conduct after the election of Lincoln to the Presidency is in some respects one of the puzzles of that period. He had been one of the great political leaders of the antislavery movement. Certain expressions fallen from his lips that had become household words, such as "the higher law," and "the irrepressible conflict," had placed him in the popular eye among the more radical of those leaders. His faculty of contemplating public problems from elevated and comprehensive points of view, a certain oracular momentousness of phrase in which he occasionally clothed his thoughts, and the boldness of his predictions as to the speedy downfall of slavery had made him an object of peculiar admiration to many ardent antislavery men, and at the same time of peculiar hatred and dread to the South. At the Republican National Convention of 1860 he was generally admitted to stand in point of ability and service foremost among the Republican candidates for the Presidency. But the apprehension that a man of views so extreme would hardly carry the doubtful states, indispensable to party success, weighed heavily against him. He had confidently counted upon receiving the nomination, and when the Republican party preferred to him the comparatively obscure "Illinois lawyer" the disappointment cut him to the quick. He sufficiently subdued his feelings to contribute to the campaign in behalf of his successful rival a series of very able speeches. But no sooner after Lincoln's election had the secession movement

broken out than Seward seemed to feel and assert himself as the one important man in the country, commissioned by providential ordination to take charge of the republic and to compose the trouble. With a naïveté not easy to comprehend in a statesman of experience, he not only thought but wrote, in letters which have since become public, that the existing administration (Buchanan's) united with the incoming one (Lincoln's) in devolving upon him the responsibility of averting the imminent disasters that, while his own party trusted him, but not without reservation, "all the other parties, North and South, cast themselves upon him; and that, if he were absent from Washington only three days, the Administration, the Congress, and the District would fall into consternation and despair."⁶¹ His attitude in the Senate displeased the ardent antislavery men because it created the impression of a willingness to make concessions to the seceders; and it displeased the earnest advocates of compromise, because it really involved no concession of consequence. He sought to encourage despondent friends of the Union with cheering predictions but was especially wrathful at his own party friends who still spoke of slavery as the cause of the trouble and expressed their determination to "stand firm." He accepted the post of Secretary of State offered him by Lincoln; then he withdrew his acceptance; and then he withdrew his withdrawal. In office he felt himself as the rightful head of the government and addressed to the President that amazing letter brought to light by Nicolay and Hay—the letter in which he asked that the matter of slavery be entirely ignored in the policy of the administration, that Fort Sumter be surrendered to the secessionists,

that the country be precipitated into a war with France and Spain, and that Mr. Lincoln, the President, should delegate his whole power to direct the policy of the government to Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State.⁶² Such a proposition addressed by a member of the cabinet to the President appears so insultingly presumptuous, and it would have been so sure, if acted upon, to involve the republic at the most critical moment in ruinous foreign complications, or, if made public, politically to ruin its author, that it is fairly inexplicable and might charitably be attributed to a temporary unsoundness of mind.

To avoid giving the "war for the Union" the appearance of an "abolition war" was indeed good hard policy during that period of doubtfulness when in the "border states" the segregation of the Union and the rebel elements had not yet taken place, and while in the North Democratic party sentiment was still an uncertain quantity. But Seward exhibited an irritation verging upon petulance whenever slavery was mentioned, even down to the time when Lincoln's cautious mind had already reached the conclusion that a determined blow at slavery by proclaiming emancipation was necessary to save the Union. It is almost incredible that, as a memorandum from Stanton's hand tells us, he should have set his face against emancipation, when first proposed by Lincoln in cabinet meeting, July 22nd, 1862, partly on the ground "that foreign nations would intervene to prevent the abolition of slavery for the sake of cotton." Indeed, he seemed unable or unwilling to comprehend that the antislavery character of the war for the Union

was an element of incalculable importance in our relations with foreign powers.

In his instructions to our ministers abroad he not only directed Mr. Adams, our minister to Great Britain, not to draw into debate any moral principle as being involved in our struggle, he not only denied that the government of the Union had any antislavery purpose in conducting the war, but with a positiveness and emphasis surpassing belief he insisted that the results of the conflict between the Union and the seceders could not possibly affect the institution of slavery. He actually, in his instruction to Mr. Dayton, our minister to France, put his astonishing prediction on record that "the Territories will remain in all respects the same whether the revolution (in the South) shall succeed or shall fail; the condition of slavery in the several states will remain just the same whether it shall succeed or shall fail."⁶³

Such precepts and predictions were not only offensive to the spirit of the party of which Mr. Seward was one of the leaders, they not only betrayed an entire misjudgment of the natural tendencies of the conflict and were fated to be most strikingly contradicted by events, but they also were apt, at the time they went forth, to strip the cause of the Union of one of its main elements of strength in its relations with foreign powers. In the upper circles of England and France the disruption of the United States was looked upon as an event by no means to be deplored; it would discredit the democratic principle; it would weaken a dangerous commercial competitor; it would prevent the growing up of a power that might become a very uncomfortable rival of European nations in arranging the affairs of the world. Be-

sides, the French Emperor was nursing his ambitious schemes upon Mexico with which the United States, unembarrassed by a domestic conflict, would surely interfere. And British industry was threatened with disastrous disturbance by the failure of the American cotton supply, owing to the blockade of the southern ports by the Union fleet—a trouble which—such was the current reasoning in England—could be permanently remedied only by the definitive establishment of Southern independence, for, the North, in spite of its superiority in population and reserves, would not be able to subjugate the Southern people fighting for their freedom on their own soil. Thus, the voice of selfishness, political as well as economic, both in England and in France, spoke in favor of the South, and both governments were strongly tempted at the earliest opportunity to recognize the Southern Confederacy as an independent nation and even to think of intervention for its benefit. The resentment of the United States, which such a step would have provoked, appeared, especially after our first disasters on the battlefield, by no means as dangerous as it had been before the outbreak of the Civil War. But there was a restraining consideration. The public opinion of civilized mankind regarded the cause of the South as that of slavery, and the cause of the North as that of hostility to slavery. And to affront the public opinion of civilized mankind by ranging itself on the side of slavery was an undertaking from which any government in some measure dependent upon the approval of the governed might well shrink. Everything, therefore, that would put into a clearer light the natural tendency of the war for the Union to destroy slavery would thereby diminish the

possibility of hostile action by foreign governments; and everything calculated to obscure that tendency would increase the possibility. The dispatches received from our ministers in Europe, even from so cool-headed a man as Charles Francis Adams, and the reports coming from our semi-official agents, even from Seward's most intimate friend and adviser, Thurlow Weed, as well as the tone of the foreign press, gave ample evidence of this important feature of the situation.

That under such circumstances Seward, in his correspondence with foreign governments, did not demonstratively exhibit slavery as the real cause of our domestic troubles and as the culprit to be put to death, may be excused on the ground of the home necessity of sparing the feelings of people of a different way of thinking who were to be attached to the Union cause. Seward might, however, with perfect safety have gone so far as to point out to the world that, while the government of the Union recognized its constitutional obligations concerning slavery in the states, the Civil War, the longer it was persisted in on the part of the South, would the more surely result in the destruction of slavery. But when, not satisfied with ignoring the slavery question, Seward went out of his way actually to predict that, whatever the fortunes of the Civil War, slavery would surely survive, he showed that he had no conception of the public sentiment of civilized mankind concerning slavery as a potent moral force, and he did his utmost to discredit the cause of the Union and to strip it of its greatest strength in the very countries in which that moral force was most needed to sustain it. It is no wonder that our enemies abroad took advantage of such utterances and that even

some of our friends lost confidence in our government. Nay, even the Southern emissaries in Europe conceived the adventurous idea of attempting to use for the South the moral force which the official spokesman of the North had so blunderingly contemned. As Mr. Adams in January, 1862, reported from London, the emissaries of the slaveholders' rebellion entertained the project of making Europeans believe that, in consideration of the immediate recognition of the Southern Confederacy and the disregard of the blockade of Southern ports, the Confederacy would promise "the prohibition of all imports of slaves and the freedom of all blacks born hereafter." The project was too grotesque to be definitely proposed, but it proved that these Southerners had a more accurate conception of the forces at work than Mr. Seward.

He had, moreover, managed to create the impression in England that he was personally hostile to that country and bent upon picking a quarrel with it. A curious story made the rounds of the clubs and drawing rooms. On the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales in the United States, Seward was said to have remarked to the Duke of Newcastle at a dinner table: "I shall soon be Secretary of State; it will then be my duty to insult Great Britain, and, by God, I am going to do it." The story was privately denied by Seward; but the number of Englishmen who treated this trifle seriously was prodigiously large; and unfortunately they could find in Seward's official as well as private utterances here and there a harshness and recklessness of phrase which confirmed their notion that Seward was actually bent upon "insulting Great Britain." This belief, widely spread

even among well-meaning people in England, became during that critical period a matter of real concern as to the relations of the two countries.

Sumner's personal intercourse with Seward remained friendly although he detested the Secretary's compromising policy and was profoundly alarmed at his efforts to eliminate from the struggle for the Union that which to Sumner seemed vital—the moral element, the anti-slavery tendency. And this alarm would sometimes break forth in his conversation with a vehemence that did not measure words. But in spite of such serious disagreements he faithfully aided Seward in the conduct of foreign affairs, and far from seeking to “undermine” the Secretary's influence abroad—as has been suggested by some ill-advised critics—he earnestly labored to disabuse the minds of Englishmen of the unfortunate impression that Seward was bent upon provoking a quarrel with Great Britain. Here Sumner's old English friendships came in good stead. With the Duke and the Duchess of Argyll, the Duke being then a member of the British cabinet, with John Bright, Richard Cobden, Gladstone, the Duchess of Sutherland, and other persons of consequence Sumner carried on an animated exchange of letters in which they uttered their sympathies, or apprehensions, or criticisms as to events on this side, while he endeavored to impress upon them, and through them upon wider circles, that ours was indeed an antislavery war deserving their moral countenance, that the government of the United States entertained none but the friendliest feelings toward Great Britain, that Mr. Seward, with whose views and ways he disagreed in other respects, sincerely shared these feelings, and that, if the

relations between the two countries were not in all respects satisfactory, it was only because the American people and their government did not in their great struggle for human freedom and civilization find in England that sympathy and moral support which they had expected and to which they thought themselves entitled. The letters thus received, whenever they contained information or advice of importance, Sumner communicated to Lincoln and his cabinet, and the correspondence thus became a valuable channel of mutual influences which not seldom were sensibly helpful in the conduct of international affairs.

Among the public men of England we had in those days but few outspoken well-wishers. Foremost among them stood John Bright, that ideal embodiment of the moral nature of Anglo-Saxondom with its virile instincts of right, freedom, and humanity, defending our cause against all comers, with indomitable courage and constancy of faith. With him stood Cobden, Forster, Milne, and a few others. But most of Sumner's old friends turned coldly away from our struggling republic. To him this was more than a surprise. That some shifty politicians in England should have seen in the disruption of our Union nothing but an advantage to Great Britain, he might have understood. But when he heard of such a man as Lord Brougham with surly cynicism denouncing the American people as "stark mad" for their attempt to break down the rebellion; of Gladstone's swift and eager cocksureness in proclaiming that the South fighting for independence could never be overcome, and that the continuance of the war on our part would be only useless and wicked blood-spilling;

and of the petty pretexts resorted to even by old anti-slavery men in England to belittle and discredit our cause, to find fault with our measures, and to discourage our efforts—when he heard all this, he was fairly prostrated with amazement and grief. Others might have resented it with greater bitterness, or vented their spleen in strong language about “perfidious Albion,” or stored up their wrath for a future day of reckoning. But to Sumner this was, perhaps more than to any other American, rather an affair of the heart than a mere matter of international politics. He was attached to England with an almost filial affection. English society had been most congenial to him and received him as its own. The great public characters of England with their high principles, learning, and culture, most nearly met his ideals of statesmanship. English history and literature had been as his daily bread. He had revered England not only as the mother of modern free government, but as the great enemy of slavery, as the champion of emancipation in the world. From this England, then, he had hoped to hear the first word to cheer us on in the struggle which was naturally destined to become the war of emancipation in America. And now, when instead of this word of cheer there came from England, at the very beginning of our war, the recognition of the slaveholding confederacy as a belligerent power, to be followed by more and more marks of sympathetic, if not even hostile, sentiment—it was to him a shock staggering his very confidence in human nature. It preyed upon him like the gnawing heartache caused by a disappointment in love.

No doubt, it was in great measure owing to this sentimental disappointment that Sumner showed himself

much more sensitive to any unfriendly symptom in the attitude of the British government or of individual Englishmen than to similar or even more threatening symptoms in the attitude of France whose Emperor, after having assiduously sought to induce Great Britain to act jointly with him against our blockade of the Southern ports, looking to the eventual recognition of the Confederacy as an independent power, actually took advantage of our embarrassments to attempt the erection of a monarchy in Mexico. Of Napoleon III Sumner had hardly expected anything better. But upon the sympathy of England he had counted with undoubting confidence. When that confidence had been shaken, he was, as often happens, inclined somewhat to exaggerate in his own mind what he deplored so much. With pathetic accents of anxiety he appealed to his English friends to remember that our war was in the very nature of things a war against slavery; that without the hope of foreign aid the slaveholders' rebellion would soon lose heart; that, therefore, England, by permitting the slaveholders to hope, was actually giving most effective support to their cause; that, by thus promoting or countenancing the establishment of an empire based upon slavery, England was falsifying her historic character as the great champion of emancipation; that if English manufacturers wanted a regular supply of cotton they could obtain it only through our success; that the North would surely triumph in the end, for such a cause sustained by such a people could never fail; that to avert such a calamity and disgrace as a war between the United States and England would be, every possible cause of irritation between them should be carefully avoided, and

nothing should be said or done that might leave a sting behind it to rankle in the heart of either nation as an incitement to eventual revenge. This last admonition especially he never grew weary of repeating.

In November, 1861, a war between Great Britain and the United States came suddenly within sight. Mason and Slidell, envoys of the Southern Confederacy to England and France, had taken passage on the British mail steamer "Trent," bound from Havana to Nassau. Captain Wilkes, commanding the United States man of war "San Jacinto," stopped the "Trent" in the Bahama Channel, boarded her, took off the two emissaries and then permitted the "Trent" to proceed on her voyage. The captives were carried to Boston Harbor and confined in Fort Warren. Captain Wilkes had acted without orders, but his conduct was hailed all over the North with a burst of enthusiasm. The popular mood was then exceptionally apt to be elated by just such an occurrence. The first months of the war had been extremely depressing. The shame of the flight from Bull Run battlefield had not yet been relieved by any conspicuous success. The people were hungry for something to be proud of. Any demonstration of boldness and energy would inspire them like a sunburst from a cloudy sky. The capture of the rebel emissaries from an unarmed vessel could indeed not be regarded as an act of heroism; but as that unarmed vessel carried the flag of a great power thought to be unfriendly as well as overbearing, there was in the boom of the gun that stopped her a note of defiance which to the "average American" had a peculiarly pleasing sound. The loyal states rang with "cheers for Captain Wilkes." The press was unanimous in lauda-

tion of the act. Public characters as cautious as Edward Everett and jurists as keen on points of international law as Richard H. Dana and Theophilus Parsons joined in the applause. Even the Secretary of the Navy wrote to the hero of the day a letter of congratulation, and the other members of the President's cabinet, as Mr. Welles recorded in his diary, coincided in expressing gratification and approval.

Sumner was of a different mind. As soon as he heard of the seizure of Mason and Slidell he said: "We shall have to give them up."⁶⁴ He saw in it a violation of the principles of international law concerning the rights of neutrals which the United States had strenuously contended for, especially against Great Britain, and he apprehended that the hostile sentiment in England would seize upon it as a cause of war. Full of anxiety he went to Washington and found the President troubled by grave misgivings. Lincoln instinctively felt the seriousness of the situation. The members of the cabinet were gradually sobering from the jubilee. Fortunately nothing had been done, beyond the hasty utterances of the Secretary of the Navy, to commit the government. No communication on the subject had taken place between the Secretary of State and the British Minister, and it was thought best to maintain this attitude until the British government should have opened the case for discussion. The President in his message at the opening of the session of Congress, on December 2nd, passed over the "Trent" affair in silence. Seward in a dispatch to Mr. Adams only mentioned that Captain Wilkes had acted without instructions and expressed a hope that the

matter would be amicably disposed of. The popular mind did not anticipate any serious trouble.

There was no transatlantic telegraph in those days. The capture of the Southern envoys had taken place on November 8th; it became known in London on the 27th; and the British Minister in Washington received his first instructions concerning it on December 19th. These instructions remained for a while a secret to the public; but the American people learned unofficially through newspapers and letters that the news of the "Trent" affair had thrown England into a paroxysm of rage. At first the British public did not know what to make of it, for England had in time of war done such things without remorse. But when Englishmen saw their government make preparations for war they concluded that a premeditated, wilful, wanton outrage had been committed. Nothing could be clearer than that the Americans wanted war with England, and that, when Seward declared to the Duke of Newcastle his intention to insult England, he meant what he said. War, therefore, it must be. This was the talk of the press, of the clubs, of the drawing rooms, of the shops and of the streets. The voices of the friends of the United States were completely drowned by the general uproar. Those who were not our friends noticed with delight the nervous haste with which the British government hurried troops to Canada and made the war fleet ready for service. Our Southern Confederates, when they heard of it, were in ecstasy. They reasoned correctly that nothing would serve their cause more effectively than a war between the United States and England at this critical time.

Meanwhile, the popular mind in the Northern states

had been wrought up to a high pitch of pride as to Captain Wilkes' act. On the first day of the session of Congress, December 2nd, the House of Representatives had adopted by a unanimous vote a joint resolution expressing the thanks of Congress to Captain Wilkes "for his brave, adroit, and patriotic conduct."⁶⁵ And when the news of the exasperation prevailing in England arrived here, there was a universal cry that under no circumstances the captured rebels should be given up. There seemed to be hardly a dissenting voice. Sumner, who had from the beginning foreseen what was to come, made it his task to restrain the Senate.

The instructions received from the British government by Lord Lyons on December 19th brought a rude awakening. The British government in very decided language demanded the surrender to the British Minister of the Confederate envoys and their secretaries, and a suitable apology. Lord Lyons was also directed in a private note that, if these demands were not complied with within seven days, he should leave Washington with the whole staff of the legation as well as the archives, and repair to London. Although the contents of the private note were for the time being kept secret by Lord Lyons, yet the President and the cabinet understood clearly that the alternative before them was that of prompt compliance with the British demands or war. That a war with Great Britain under the circumstances then existing would ruin the Union cause could hardly be doubted.⁶⁶

The Administration resolved to give up Mason and Slidell, but put the act of Wilkes upon actionable

grounds,⁶⁷ a remarkable instance of Seward's ill-considered, slipshod way of doing things, which in this case resulted, in fact, in a moral humiliation. Sumner, in a speech, set the United States right and restored the dignity of the Republic, showing that the capture would have been justified on British impressment precedents, but was not justified on the principles of international law, always professed and observed by the United States. This speech, showing that Sumner was not *merely* a moral agitator, found general favor and greatly raised his reputation.

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Sumner then proceeded to push for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, which, moved by Wilson, was carried successfully, and against the surrender of fugitive slaves by the army. He put through the Senate without a dissenting vote a treaty between the United States and Great Britain for the more effective suppression of the slave trade. He carried the recognition of Hayti and Liberia as independent states; Hayti voted him a medal and hung up his portrait in its State House. He watched [for] an opportunity for the complete repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and began his efforts for equality of civil rights regardless of color,—first moving the removal of the disability of colored persons as witnesses in the Courts of the United States and as mail carriers.

During the first year of the war, the subject of reconstruction loomed up. Sumner's theory was radical. He contended that states whose whole political and legal machinery had repudiated the authority of the United States had committed suicide as states—that their laws

had become void and that Congress had as much power over them as over the Territories. Of course, the slaves in them were free. The conservative Republicans stood aghast.⁶⁹ Sumner's formula was not accepted. It was denied that States of the Union could commit suicide. But Sumner's position was in fact little more than an extreme theoretical expression of the principle which at last was practically applied in the work of reconstruction. The practical existence of the State of the Union, that is, the practical existence of its relations to the Union was recognized only on conditions. Unless these conditions were fulfilled, it was held that the State might theoretically exist as one in the Union, but that practically its relations to the Union and its rights in it were not operative. He [Sumner] held fast to the idea that all reconstruction measures should be initiated by Congress.

Upon the confiscation act he looked favorably, mainly because it would further emancipation. The act, authorizing the President to employ colored people for the suppression of the rebellion in the army and the navy, had from him an enthusiastic response. He disliked confiscation of ordinary property as such. He early discountenanced the idea that, after the suppression of the rebellion, the leaders would have to suffer capital punishment.⁷⁰ Amid the passions of the war, in 1862, he offered in the Senate a resolution declaring it inexpedient "that the names of victories obtained over our fellow-citizens should be placed on the regimental colors of the United States."⁷¹ General Scott was in sympathy with him. In this respect he never swerved from the broad and liberal principle.

He had great misgivings as to the policy of making

treasury notes a legal tender, and yielded only to Chase's representations of the necessities of the situation. He took frequent part in debates on internal revenue tax—as well as tariff bills—throughout reasoning upon sound principles. He greatly favored the bill for the Pacific Railroad and the Homestead Act.

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 In 1863 [Sumner] was re-elected to the Senate by an enormous majority in the Legislature, although a strong campaign had been made against him, even inside of his party.

Letter to Bright about Seward and the Emancipation Proclamation: "I have loved England, and now deplore her miserable and utterly false position towards my country."⁷³

To the Duchess of Argyll: "Next to my own country right, I long to see England right."⁷⁴

The anti-Seward movement. Strange dispatch, July 5, 1862.⁷⁵

Events worked in favor of the realization of Sumner's ideas. The defeat of McClellan on the Peninsula and the subsequent disasters strengthened the idea that *all* means had to be used to overcome the rebellion. Thus the Emancipation Proclamation as a military necessity meant the enlistment of negroes as soldiers. February 9, 1863, he presented a bill for the enlistment of slaves and others of African descent, which became part of a law a year later.

Sumner's most important service during our civil conflict consisted in his successful efforts to prevent a war with England or France or both. He strenuously endeavored to keep our government from meddling with

the French in Mexico.⁷⁶ He quietly but firmly shelved all the indiscreet resolutions passed by the House of Representatives and thus stopped mischief immensely dangerous.

He earnestly opposed a bill for granting letters of marque and reprisal on the ground that privateering was an uncivilized and demoralizing practice and likely to embroil us with foreign powers. The bill which had been instigated by Seward passed both houses in spite of Sumner's opposition, but his efforts to prevent its being carried into effect were so effective with Lincoln that no letters of marque and reprisal were ever issued. Seward angrily said: "there were too many Secretaries of State in Washington."⁷⁷

He put through strong resolutions against foreign mediation in our domestic troubles.⁷⁸ *Lifting the tone.*

He kept up a lively intercourse with foreign ministers in Washington.⁷⁹ He was terribly anxious about the building and fitting out of rebel ships in England.⁸⁰ His letters to his English friends were almost imploring in their tone. Lord Russell's letters and dispatches irritated him deeply. The saying in Washington was, "We are now at war with England, but the hostilities are all on one side."⁸¹ He regarded the situation, justly, as more threatening than at the time of the "Trent" affair. He wrote to the Duchess of Argyll: "The dreams of my life will be disappointed. I have longed for peace everywhere, but especially with England. I have labored always for it, and now in daily counsels I still labor for it; nor am I unheard."⁸²

The tide of our civil war turned with the battle of Gettysburg. Then a strange fear seized him—that the

war end too quickly and that slavery be saved after all by compromise.⁸³ In this he was wrong. It could not be saved. The death struggle could only have been prolonged.

In his correspondence he worked hard for the principal object of arousing the moral sentiment of England, and frequently expressed his anxiety lest things be done by England which might cause a grudge to be stored up against her in this country which might cause future trouble. Cobden wrote: "I hardly know anybody, except our courageous friend Bright (who rather likes to battle with the long odds against him), that thinks you can put down the rebellion."⁸⁴ The spirit of England.⁸⁵ Sumner's address on our foreign relations⁸⁶ was unfavorably received in England even by friends. His usual fault—not to measure the weight of words. But it had its effect in opening English eyes to the gravity of the situation.

In December, 1863, the French minister, Mercier, visited him to declare his own firm conviction that the war must result in separation, and to offer the mediation of the French emperor. Sumner "snapped his fingers."⁸⁷ But it was the emperor that had been constantly stirring up the British government against us.

At last he succeeded in formally repealing the Fugitive Slave Law, now of little practical importance, June, 1864; also the abolition of the coastwise slave-trade; and was very potential in the establishment of the freedmen's bureau.

Then began also his work for the equal civil and political rights of the colored people—beginning with the abolition of discrimination against colored people on street railways, then, following, their admission as

witnesses in the federal courts, then the equality of pay in the army, then the admission to the right of voting,—and he pressed these subjects with such sleepless pertinacity, such a complete contempt of temporary expediency, such an unfeeling disregard of the feelings of his Republican colleagues, such an unmindfulness of a surrounding lack of sympathy, such a courage undimmed and unwearied by temporary failure and defeat, that he finally overcame all obstacles and opposition and carried his point.

Here manifested itself that peculiar kind of leadership he won, which consisted in constantly urging and pressing forward the things he wished done, and in forcing Senators to go on record, until, sometimes much against their inclination, they yielded,—not seldom treasuring up grudges against him who forced them.

He supported the amendment to the Constitution prohibiting slavery, although he thought slavery could, under existing circumstances, be abolished and prohibited by Act of Congress without a constitutional amendment. His words: "Nothing against slavery can be unconstitutional"⁸⁸ showed the trend of his mind.

It was he, too, who of his own motion, two years before Jenckes, without consultation with anybody, introduced the first bill to reform the civil service, making subordinate places subject to competitive examination.

Lincoln was renominated. Sumner would have preferred the nomination of Chase. But he took no active part in the machinations against Lincoln, and deprecated all things that might seem hostile to him.

He urged the appointment of Chase as Chief Justice

—a gracious act on Lincoln's part. Sumner had the felicity to move in the Supreme Court the admission as counsellor of the first colored man.

He firmly opposed a resolution for retaliation in the treatment of prisoners of war, insisting that the United States "renounce all vengeance and every evil example, and plant themselves firmly on the sacred landmarks of Christian civilization."⁸⁹

The subject of reconstruction came up in earnest. Steps had been taken for setting up a legal state government, first in Louisiana under the orders of Mr. Lincoln. The plan confined the right of voting to "white male citizens." Less than eleven thousand of over sixty thousand had voted. A resolution was introduced in the Senate (February 18, 1865) to recognize the state government of Louisiana so constructed as legitimate. Sumner took the ground that only Congress had the power by legislative act to reconstruct and readmit the late rebel states, and that no such state should be readmitted to full fellowship without having extended the right of voting to the colored people. He fought the Louisiana resolution with the utmost tenacity, resorting even to the expedient of filibustering, and succeeded in defeating it. It was one of Lincoln's favorite plans, and people thought that with Sumner's successful opposition to it the friendship between Lincoln and Sumner had come to an end. But immediately afterwards Lincoln invited him to accompany him to the Inauguration ball, where Sumner appeared with Mrs. Lincoln on his arm.⁹⁰ Lincoln knew how to keep a friend although he differed from him.

The tenacity with which Sumner adhered to negro

suffrage as a condition of readmission was potential, if not decisive, in making negro suffrage a permanent feature of the subsequent reconstruction policy. For good or evil? Mistake whichever way.

Lincoln [was] murdered. Sumner, who had been with him in Virginia a few days before, was at his death bed.

At once he sought the new President, Johnson, to sound him on negro suffrage and reconstruction. He received the answer: "There is no difference between us."⁹¹ Johnson rejected this on another occasion.

He [Sumner] was sorry that Jefferson Davis had been caught. He wished him to escape to Mexico.

Johnson's North Carolina proclamation (May 29, 1865) rudely disappointed Sumner's hopes. Sumner appealed to the Republican Convention of his State in an impassioned speech, [which] endorsed warmly his programme of equal suffrage as a reconstruction condition, although most of the Republican states hesitated. They, however, came to him after awhile—the sluggards in Congress did so, partly obeying the logic of circumstances, partly his unceasing urgency.

President Johnson's experiment of reconstruction led to much confusion in the Southern states, to a breach between him and his party, and to a conflict between Congress and the Administration in which the advantage was altogether on the side of Congress with its more than two-thirds Republican majorities in both houses.

Sumner sought the President personally before the meeting of Congress and found him "no longer sympathetic . . . but harsh, petulant, and unreasonable."⁹²

Sumner then thought and said that "by the assassination of Abraham Lincoln the rebellion had vaulted into the Presidential chair."⁹³ On the first day of the session he opened the debate with a set of resolutions embodying his ideas of reconstruction, diametrically opposite to the policy of the President. He found the power to establish equality of suffrage by *act of Congress* in the *constitutional obligation to guarantee to the states a republican form of government*. He found no state government to be within the guaranty of a republican form that was founded on caste and excluded great masses of citizens from a share in it solely because of conditions of color.

Pierce says well: "Sumner's argument was that of a moralist, not that of a lawyer." His dictum: "Whatever is required for the national safety is constitutional,"⁹⁴ carries one to an impossible latitude of construction. Although his constitutional doctrines were not widely accepted, still his argument made powerfully for the end he had in view—the establishment of absolute equality of political and civil rights between the races. The Senate and the party were irresistibly compelled on by *force majeure*. There was something oppressive, overruling in Sumner's speeches. The hearers, however reluctant, were impressed with a feeling that in some way they would have to get up to his position. The effect of a *very positive character*.

President Johnson was very much incensed, and openly denounced him in one of his rambling speeches. But the Massachusetts Legislature passed a resolution censuring the President.

The "Alabama" claims against Great Britain loomed

up. The House, in which there has always been a want of responsibility concerning foreign affairs, preparing for retaliation in case of war, unanimously passed a bill "scaling down" or relaxing our neutrality laws so as to make it more easy in case of war to annoy and punish Great Britain. But Sumner, however strong in his opinions as to the conduct of Great Britain, stoutly and successfully opposed it, maintaining that whatever Great Britain might have done or deserved, "our own country should be kept firm and constant in the attitude of justice."⁹⁵ The Senate might have been carried off by the same impulse as the House (under the influence of the Fenian movement). Sumner *alone* arrested it, and only he could do it.⁹⁶

One of his public spirited efforts—he urged international copyright. Also the metric system.

In 1866 symptoms of his malady returned, made his friends anxious. His marriage.⁹⁷

He succeeded in having equal suffrage made the condition of admission of new states, Nebraska and Colorado, and also of the admission of reconstructed states. This was the seal he put upon the reconstruction measures. The constitutional amendment establishing negro suffrage passed afterwards. He was helped very much by Johnson's perversity and by the troubles in the Southern states. His Republican colleagues, who first opposed him in those measures, found themselves finally forced to support them by a sort of intellectual and moral dragooning on his part, which was not seldom resented.

His reasoning⁹⁸ colored voting in the South was a

necessity to secure loyal governments. The question of principle reinforced the argument.

Alaska.⁹⁹ He came to the support of the scheme with some reluctance. He thought it would be an ungracious thing to Russia to reject the treaty at that stage of proceedings; he wished also to please Seward, and once having taken it up for study and begun to compose an erudite speech upon it, he became enamored of his subject. But he entered an emphatic protest against the treaty being made "a precedent for a system of indiscriminate and costly annexation."¹⁰⁰ He had occasion to enforce this protest by killing by his disfavor Seward's scheme to annex the island of St. Thomas.

Sumner, the man, challenges our sympathy at this period. After his matrimonial disaster he also took leave of the house in Boston in which he had been born and said to Longfellow: "I have buried from this house my father. . . ." ¹⁰¹ Character.¹⁰²

Bank's naturalization bill with retaliatory provisions, looking to the Fenians. "Sumner will put his foot on it."¹⁰³ He firmly opposed anything and everything not up to high standards of international morality. He was urged to approve the bill "for political reasons,"¹⁰⁴ but did not do so.

His encounter with Conkling.¹⁰⁵

The impeachment of Johnson. Sumner's note to Stanton—"stick."¹⁰⁶ Sumner was one of the first to favor impeachment. He regarded it "as a political rather than a judicial proceeding to be conducted without any technicality in the procedure or in the admission of evidence."¹⁰⁷ Upon all this the subsequent judgment of public opinion did not sustain him.

A movement for paying the national bonds in greenbacks was sweeping over the West and Pennsylvania. Even Sherman qualifiedly succumbed to it.¹⁰⁸ Sumner made an elaborate speech against it, firmly upholding the sacredness of the public faith—although financial questions were not to his taste. As early as 1869 he loudly called for return to specie payments.

The nomination in 1868 of General Grant, a military officer without civil experience, was not to his taste, but he never publicly objected to it, and supported him in good faith.

In January, 1869, he was re-elected by an almost unanimous vote of the Legislature for his fourth and last term, in remarkable contrast to his first election.

At the third session of the 40th Congress the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution was passed, forbidding the denial or abridgment of the right of suffrage on account of color. Sumner, who thought that Congress had the right to forbid such discrimination by simple law, offered a bill as a substitute which, however, received only nine votes. As a supreme rule of constitutional interpretation he affirmed that "Anything for human rights is constitutional. . . . There can be no State rights against human rights."¹⁰⁹ And he was quite impatient with those who could not see things in the same light. The Constitutional Amendment passed—without attracting very much attention—a consequence of the excitements which had preceded it.

Grant organized his administration in somewhat military style—certainly by purely personal choice. Sumner objected when Grant asked that a statute should be repealed which stood in the way of A. T. Stewart being

Secretary of the Treasury. The Senate upon sober second thought agreed with him and Grant substituted another name. But he was probably displeased at Sumner's objection.

Sumner was delighted with the appointment of Hamilton Fish as Secretary of State. Their relations had, in spite of divergence of political opinion, been most cordial for many years. Fish relied upon Sumner's "friendship, experience, support and aid to supply his (Fish's) manifold deficiencies."¹¹⁰ At first Sumner was consulted by Fish on everything. Motley was appointed Minister to England, favored by Sumner, but not *urged* by him.

A rapid statement of Sumner's attitude on international questions.¹¹¹

The Johnson-Clarendon treaty, concluded without specific instructions and signed January 14, 1869, was reported upon by Sumner adversely and he spoke on it in the Senate, April 13, 1869. His speech set forth the injuries suffered by us from England without making any definite demand, and was pacific in tone. The treaty was rejected by all against one vote and the Administration fully approved Sumner's action and speech, warmly complimenting him on it. It created great excitement in England. It was received as a hostile demonstration, a revelation of enmity, especially unexpected and startling coming from him. But it had the effect of setting the English to thinking about the gravity of our case, and at once they ceased to treat it with indifference. From this time on the matter was taken very seriously and the British government showed some anxiety to know what terms of settlement would be acceptable to

the United States. It was, indeed, the beginning of the negotiations which ended in the Geneva Arbitration. He continued to love England more than any other American statesman did, although in England it was not believed. His speech, in fact, was scarcely more than a repetition of what had been said by him before and in our diplomatic correspondence. It was no advance beyond the position our government had always taken. Mr. Fish, in his instructions for Motley, substantially restated Sumner's position. His speech, in fact, was the basis of the American case at Geneva. In a public speech he mentioned the cession of Canada as a desirable possibility.

Fish continued to consult Sumner especially on matters connected with these points. Sumner's relations with the Administration remained friendly until the San Domingo business appeared on the scene.

Sumner continued to give much attention to questions of national finance on which his views were eminently sound and wise. He was against the abolition of the franking privilege but strongly urged a reduction of postage, rejecting the idea that the federal Post Office should be a self-supporting institution.

*His way of surmounting points of law by appeals to the rights of man.*¹¹²

Sumner's conservative views and conduct concerning the revolutionary movement in Cuba.¹¹³ He governed his conduct strictly by the rule of international law.

Grant had territorial aggrandizement in mind from the beginning, first probably looking to Cuba, then to San Domingo when [Buenaventura] Baez offered his country for sale. He sent Babcock to inquire into the

resources of the country and the disposition of the people, but Babcock, September 4, 1869, executed a protocol of annexation, stipulating for a payment of \$1,500,000 by the United States for the extinction of the Dominican debt. With the protocol signed by him as: "Aide-de-camp to his Excellency, Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States of America," he returned to Washington. He had added the pledge that "his Excellency, General Grant, President of the United States, promises privately to use all his influence in order that the idea of annexing the Dominican republic to the United States may acquire such a degree of popularity among members of Congress as will be necessary for its accomplishment."¹¹⁴ President Grant did not kick this presumptuous aide-de-camp downstairs but approved his conduct. In November [1869] Babcock was sent back to San Domingo with several United States ships of war at his disposal and concluded two treaties, one for the annexation of San Domingo, the other for the base of the Bay of Samana, giving the President guaranty that San Domingo would be protected against any foreign interference during the pendency of negotiations. This was followed by corresponding orders to the navy.¹¹⁵

About New Year's Day, 1870, Grant called on Sumner to propitiate him as to the treaty of annexation. This visit has become a matter of controversy. From personal knowledge I can testify to Sumner's answer: "Mr. President, I am an Administration man, and whatever you do will always find in me the most careful and candid consideration."¹¹⁶ Grant understood this as a promise of support. Sumner laid the treaties before his committee, himself reticent. The treaties were long be-

fore the Committee without Sumner expressing any opinion on their merit. He was opposed mainly on account of the effect the annexation of San Domingo would have on the future of the African race—the conquest and subjugation of Hayti; also the manner in which the treaty had been brought about, Baez being kept in power substantially by our navy.

Grant had his heart set on the treaty and was impatient with opposition. He was also somewhat affected by the adulation of sycophants and disposed to take opposition as personal hostility. He held the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs responsible for the opposition of the Senate to the treaty. But among the opponents Sumner was neither the most zealous nor the most effective.

The Committee reported against the treaty on March 15, 1870. In the Senate Sumner spoke four hours—very gently of the President. The treaty had no popular sympathy and was rejected late in June—the treaty receiving half the vote of the Senate. It would have received much less but for Executive pressure.

The next day Motley was removed from the mission to England and the public understood this to be a blow at Sumner. This looked like a declaration of war—a beginning of one of those miserable fights so disgraceful to those originating them and so dangerous to political parties.

Grant did not accept this defeat. He set about to renew the attempt and also to punish his opponents. Several Republicans, sincerely friendly to him, entreated him to desist, but in vain. He urged the annexation scheme in his message with vehemence. He encouraged

an attempt to have the annexation scheme put through Congress by joint resolution as in the case of Texas, but failed. He asked for authority to send a commission of inquiry to San Domingo which brought on a new debate and called Sumner forth once more. In his speech he compared the methods of Grant with those of Pierce, Buchanan and Andrew Johnson, which by Grant's friends was considered offensive to the President, although he [Sumner] earnestly disclaimed any disrespect.¹¹⁷ He was the target of violent attacks. The resolution passed December 21, 1870. Another attack of angina pectoris, the first since 1859.

Now the vengeance came. Sumner had, in spite of all disagreements, continued to be on personally friendly terms with Fish. On December 30, 1870, a dispatch concerning the Motley case issued from the State Department containing an allusion to Sumner in which his character was grossly assailed. It became public January 9, 1871. This ended, not the official intercourse, but the relations of personal friendship between Sumner and Fish. They met officially and discussed public affairs, but Sumner refused to recognize Fish at a dinner.

On March 4th following, the new Congress began, and the Senate being in session, on March 9th the Senate caucus met to arrange the committees. It became apparent that it had been resolved upon to remove Sumner from the Committee on Foreign Relations. It was generally believed that this scheme to punish him and to impair his influence had emanated from the White House on account of his opposition to the San Domingo scheme, and this popular belief was no doubt well-founded. All the pretexts that were brought forward,

that his relations to the President and the Secretary of State made it impossible for him to hold official intercourse with them, as well as the posthumous pretext that he had neglected the business of his committee, or that his views on the "Alabama" question would imperil a settlement, are too flimsy to deserve consideration. He was deposed. It was a grievous blow to him. The act had its grotesque side, for Mr. Cameron who was put in his place had to admit himself that he was far from possessing the necessary qualifications. It was a barefaced, wanton act of revenge, and of base subserviency on the part of the Senate. But if this act of persecution was expected to help the San Domingo scheme through the Senate, it proved a miserable failure. The efforts of the Administration could not carry that scheme against an adverse public opinion. They resulted only in creating and keeping alive much bad feeling in the Republican party.

Nor did the removal of Sumner from the head of the Committee on Foreign Relations serve to neutralize his influence with regard to the settlement of our differences with Great Britain concerning the "Alabama" claims. The Joint High Commission was then in session at Washington. It was a matter of remark that, although he [Sumner] was not on terms of friendly intercourse with the Administration, the British High Commissioners conferred more with him than with any other public man in the country, and it was he, not the then Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who made the principal speech on the treaty when it was submitted to the Senate. He moved some amendments, all looking toward limiting the evils of maritime war

under rule of international law, but he abstained from insisting upon them in order not to put the treaty in jeopardy. He gave it his cordial support and vote.

It is worthy of remark how the treaty obviated all the objections he had made to the Clarendon-Johnson treaty in his speech of 1869, so that this speech may indeed be looked upon as the turning point in the negotiations upon this subject, as frankly confessed by Earl de Grey.¹¹⁸

It had been a favorite idea of Sumner's that perpetual peace with England would be promoted by the disappearance of the British flag from the American continent and with it many causes of irritation, and he thought that the conclusion of a settlement of the very serious differences between Great Britain and the United States by the treaty of Washington would be a favorable opportunity for bringing on this consummation. He mentioned this in a memorandum submitted to Mr. Fish January 17, 1871. The general conception was by no means unstatesmanlike. To expect that Great Britain would willingly accede to such a proposition was no doubt sanguine. But that Sumner never seriously thought of this as a *conditio sine qua non*, while he did think of it as a desirable thing, is certain. He never mentioned it among the amendments he moved to the treaty of Washington, which is proof conclusive. It has been alleged, many years after Sumner's death, as the principal, although secret reason why the Administration asked for his removal from the Chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee. This was clearly an afterthought. It would have been a wrong reason, too, as events proved. For had Sumner entertained the idea

of this as a *conditio sine qua non*, he would have stuck to it,—and I should have known of it.

The breach between Sumner and Grant was irremediable. All efforts at conciliation made by Wilson, a good-hearted and [illegible word] peacemaker, proved futile. Sumner was in point of principle still in the main in full accord with his party,—indeed, somewhat ahead of it. He favored the anti-Ku Klux legislation and strenuously urged his civil rights bill, intended [to] secure to colored people full equality in the ordinary relations of life, prohibiting “discrimination against them by common carriers of passengers, proprietors of theatres and inns, managers of schools, cemeteries, and churches, and as to service on juries in many states or national courts.”¹¹⁹ This measure, indeed, was nearest to his heart and he pressed it in season and out of season, urging it especially by way of amendment to amnesty bills as a joint measure of reconciliation. The Declaration of Independence higher than the Constitution—“earlier in time, loftier, more majestic, more sublime in character and principle.”¹²⁰ His efforts were long in vain. Significance of his attitude.¹²¹

But the renomination of Grant by the Republican party loomed up before him as a dreadful probability and as the Administration had pursued its objects at the expense of party harmony, he thought it time to attack the Administration. Some very suspicious transactions connected with the sale of arms to the French government during the Franco-Prussian war having come to his notice, which convinced him that there had been dishonest practices as well as a breach of international duty, [he] offered resolutions of inquiry which led to

a very spirited and somewhat acrimonious debate, and an investigation by a committee controlled entirely by the Administration, which, although strengthening the suspicions of irregular practices, resulted in a report of the majority of the committee completely exonerating the Administration. A minority reported otherwise. For a debate on the report but little time could be found, as the close of the session was near at hand. Sumner, as he had done once when discussing the fugitive slave law, interrupted the consideration of an appropriation bill to make an elaborate speech against Grant. To appreciate its bearing it is necessary to review the political field.

The Liberal Republican Movement.¹²² Sumner sympathized with it as a movement against Grant and for reconciliation. He himself had been thought of as a candidate. Greeley! Nominations. Sumner long reticent. Efforts of his friends on both sides. Finally he declared himself on May 31 [1872]. To the French arms case he referred but little, but he hurled an elaborate philippic at Grant—his nepotism, his gift-taking, the appointment of the givers of gifts to high offices, the low character of his surroundings, his “nefarious” statesmanship, his unconstitutional arrogation of power, etc. The answer to the speech in the Senate was largely personal abuse; in the press and, in great measure, in popular talk a commemoration of Grant’s services in the war. Sumner had hoped that such an arraignment might produce an impression in the country strong enough to prevent Grant’s renomination, but this, of course, it failed to do. Sumner had entirely miscalculated the influence military

glory exercises over the popular imagination. The re-nomination was a predestined event.

What Sumner thought of the Greeley movement he expressed in a letter [to John Greenleaf Whittier, August 11, 1872:

Never have I acted more absolutely under the mandate of duty, not to be disobeyed, than in my present course. Profoundly convinced of Grant's unfitness, and feeling that a man like Greeley, President, would mark an epoch for humanity, I could not resist the opportunity especially when Democrats took him as their candidate, and pledged themselves to all that is contained in the Cincinnati platform. From the beginning, while insisting upon all possible securities and safeguards, I have pleaded for 'reconciliation.' This is the word which recurs constantly in my speeches. The South insisted that I was revengeful. Never! And now the time has come for me to show the mood in which I acted. This is a painful experience; but we are not choosers in this world. Certainly I did not choose this.]¹²³

He declared publicly his support of Greeley. He was urged to speak in different states, but the condition of his health forbade it. He wished to speak in Faneuil Hall, but the same reason compelled him to desist, and his speech was published in the newspapers while he went to Europe upon the advice of his physician. In his absence the Democrats and the Liberal Republicans of Massachusetts nominated him for the governorship which he promptly declined by telegraph. His physical strength was much reduced.

Grant carried all the Northern and a majority of the Southern states. A large number of Democrats could not be prevailed upon to support Greeley, and many of the Liberal Republicans had lost heart. Still, the opposition

to Grant was not dead. It lived among many who voted for him, and his second administration justified it.

After his return, Sumner's absences from the Senate on account of his health were frequent. But on the first day he introduced his bill to omit the names of Civil War victories from the battle flags of the army.¹²⁴ He had made similar propositions in 1862 and 1865. But now there was a fierce partizan outcry. The Republican Legislature of Massachusetts passed a resolution condemning the bill. Sumner was greatly astonished at the tempest he had caused, and profoundly hurt by the censure of the Legislature of Massachusetts. An effort was made by the best people of Massachusetts to induce the next Legislature to rescind the resolution of censure, but in vain. It was rescinded, however, in [February, 1874].¹²⁵

The attacks of angina pectoris returned. He was ready to welcome death.¹²⁶ But he rallied and still had a spell of apparently perfect health.

The "Virginius" case.¹²⁷ His undiminished courage to brave a current of opinion. Credit Mobilier—Back Pay—Sumner the ideal of purity and disinterestedness. The heart of Massachusetts perceptibly returning to him. His re-election for a fifth term more and more probable—not so much "as the leader of a party as the first citizen of the Commonwealth."¹²⁸

Winter session, 1873-1874. Returning cordiality of Republican Senators. The second administration of Grant produced the impression that the seceders of 1872 were after all not without good reason. Still, he was not invited to Republican caucus and not put in prominent positions on Committees. On the first day he re-

introduced his civil rights bill and made an unsuccessful effort to call it up. It passed after his death and was subsequently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

One of his last characteristic acts was a profession of willingness to support by speech and vote the nomination of Caleb Cushing for the place of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,¹²⁹ demonstrating again the catholicity of his spirit and the firmness of his friendship. His last days in the Senate were cheered by the presentation of the resolution of the Massachusetts Legislature rescinding the vote of censure on his battleflag bill.

His attacks of angina pectoris returned with unprecedented violence on Tuesday, March 10, [1874], and he died the next day.

APPENDIX I

Carl Schurz began the second draft of his essay on Sumner with comments on the book of Edward L. Pierce, *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, 4 vols. (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1877-1894). The comments are placed here for reasons set forth in the introduction to this volume.

No public man ever had a more faithful and conscientious biographer than Charles Sumner found in Mr. Edward L. Pierce. The presentation of Sumner's public and private life in the four volumes before us is so complete that even those of Sumner's surviving contemporaries, who belonged to the circle of his personal friends, will find in it much that is new to them, or that, at least, sheds new lights upon facts and circumstances with which they were acquainted. Mr. Pierce must have been aware that the scrupulous minuteness with which he described Sumner's doings almost from day to day, and the enumeration of occurrences and circumstances, which he could hardly expect to be of great interest to the ordinary reader, would be apt to mar the artistic symmetry of his work and to detract from its literary merit. But he was evidently governed by an overpowering sense of his duty to make his picture elaborate in every particular point that might contribute to the truthfulness of the whole, and thus he may have consciously sacrificed some of the charms which a more rapid narration would have given to his book. It is, however, probable that even many of those among his readers to whom Sumner was only a distinguished historic figure, like other important men of the past, will, long before they lay down this biography, have conceived too [strong?] an interest in the subject to blame the author for having led them through such a mass of detail. That he succeeded in turning this mass throughout into good reading proves an uncommon order of literary ability. Not a few passages, among which the

opening chapter of the third volume on Boston society especially excels by its vigor and vividness of description, are models of their kind.

That Mr. Pierce, who as a young man saw in Sumner his moral guide in politics and in later years became one of his intimate friends, should be found in warm sympathy with his subject was to be expected. But the biographer, while outspoken in his high estimation of Sumner's character and services, and while stoutly defending him against his assailants, does not fail to discriminate; nor does he ask us to take his judgment upon trust, for, by giving us the facts and arguments, on both sides in full, he enables us to judge for ourselves.

On the whole, these volumes showing us an important figure on the background of a time teeming with events of the greatest moment, are a most valuable contribution to that part of American history in which the fame of Abraham Lincoln has so much overshadowed all other political leaders of the period that they are in danger of not receiving the full measure of consideration due to them.

APPENDIX II

[Here is the alternate ending of Schurz's second draft, ms. pages 92-94. Compare pages 99-103 above.]

With pathetic accents of anxiety he [Sumner] appealed to his English friends to remember that our war was in the very nature of things a war against slavery; that without the hope of foreign aid the slaveholders' rebellion would soon lose heart; that, therefore, England, by permitting the slaveholders to hope, was actually giving most effective support to their cause; that by thus promoting or countenancing the establishment of an empire based upon slavery England was falsifying her historic character as the great champion of emancipation; that if English manufacturers wanted a regular supply of cotton they could obtain it only through our success; that the North would surely triumph in the end, for such a cause sustained by such a people could never fail; that, to avert such a calamity as a war between the United States and England would be, every possible cause of irritation should be avoided, and nothing should be said or done that might leave a sting behind it to rankle in the heart of either nation as an incitement to eventual revenge.

In November 1861 the dreaded war cloud suddenly hove in sight. Two envoys of the Southern Confederacy to England and France, Mason and Slidell, on their way to Europe, had taken passage on the British mail steamer "Trent," bound from Havana to St. Thomas. Captain Wilkes, commanding the United States man-of-war "San Jacinto," stopped the "Trent" in the Bahama channel, took off the two envoys and their secretaries, and then permitted the "Trent" to continue her voyage. The captives were carried to Boston harbor and confined in Fort Warren. Captain Wilkes had acted without orders, but his conduct was hailed

all over the North with a burst of enthusiasm. The popular mood was then exceptionally apt to be elated by just such an occurrence. The first months of the civil war had been extremely depressing. The shame of the Bull Run rout had not yet been relieved by any conspicuous success. The people were hungry for something to be proud of. Any demonstration of boldness and energy would inspire them like a sunburst from a dark sky. The capture of the Southern envoys from an unarmed vessel could indeed not be regarded as a very heroic achievement. But as that unarmed vessel bore the British flag, the flag of a great power thought to be unfriendly as well as overbearing, there was in the boom of the gun that stopped her a note of defiance which to the "average American" had a peculiarly pleasing sound. The loyal states rang with "cheers for Captain Wilkes." His exploit had the unanimous praise of the newspapers. It was celebrated in after dinner speeches bristling with patriotism and points of international law. Wheaton, Vattel, and Puffendorf were volubly quoted in support of it at ladies' tea parties. Old and cautious statesmen like Edward Everett and learned and acute jurists such as Richard H. Dana and Theophilus Parsons impulsively joined in the general applause. Even the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Welles, wrote to the hero of the days a letter of congratulation, suggesting only that it might have been well to bring in the vessel too for adjudication; and the other members of the President's Cabinet "coincided in expressing gratification and approval."

Alone among his fellow citizens in Boston Sumner stood unmoved by the jubilee around him. When he heard of the capture of Mason and Slidell, he instantly said: "We shall have to give them up." He clearly saw in that act a violation of the very principles of international law as to the rights of neutrals which the United States had strenuously contended for, especially against the contrary pretensions of Great Britain. And he apprehended also that the hostile interest in England would seize upon this occurrence as a

[illegible word] of war. It required but little time to prove him right.

There being no ocean telegraph in those days, news travelled slowly. The taking of Mason and Slidell from the "Trent," which happened on the 8th of November, was reported in New York on the 16th, and in England on the 27th. A fierce indignation meeting at Liverpool, assembled on the spur of the moment to denounce the "outrage on the British flag," set the pace for subsequent proceedings. A few Englishmen remembered that in past times British warships had in hundreds of cases boarded American vessels and done things morally equivalent to the taking of the Southern emissaries from the "Trent," or worse. But that recollection was silenced by the cry about the "outraged British flag." The "Rule Britannia class" as John Bright called the jingoes of that time vied with the active friends of the Southern Confederacy in firing the British heart; and when the public learned that the law officers had found the act of Captain Wilkes to have been contrary to international law, and that the government was actually dispatching troops to Canada and ordering naval preparations for war, the general conclusion was that the United States had done something amounting to an intolerable provocation and that hostilities were inevitable. The British government determined its course of action without waiting to hear the American side of the case, and on December 1st, the fourth day after the arrival of the news in England, a Queen's messenger was on his way with instructions to Lord Lyons. On the 19th he reached Washington.

In the United States meanwhile the popular jubilee continued lustily, in happy ignorance of what was doing on the other side of the Atlantic. But the members of the government had fallen into a sober mood. When Sumner, full of anxiety, reached Washington he found the President troubled by grave misgivings. Although not learned in international law, Lincoln felt the gravity of the case and eagerly welcomed Sumner as an advisor. Sumner had frequent conferences with the President as well as the Secretary of State

in which he counselled extreme caution, pointing out what the ultimate outcome must be. Fortunately nothing had been done, save the hasty utterance of the Secretary of the Navy, to commit the administration. Seward, who at first had been affected by the general enthusiasm, in a dispatch to Mr. Adams only mentioned that Captain Wilkes had acted without instructions, and expressed a hope that the matter would be amicably disposed of. The President, in his message at the opening of the session of Congress on December 2nd, did not mention the "Trent affair" at all. No communication took place between the Secretary of State and the British minister, and it was thought prudent to maintain this attitude until the British government should have opened the case for discussion. But Congress, governed by the popular feeling, could not be easily controlled. On the first day of the session the House of Representatives unanimously passed a vote of thanks to Captain Wilkes for his "brave, adroit, and patriotic conduct." Sumner made it his task to restrain the Senate.

The instructions received from the British government by Lord Lyons on December 19th brought a rude awakening. The British government in very decided language demanded the surrender to the British minister of the Confederate envoys and their secretaries, and a suitable apology. Lord Lyons was also directed in a private note that, if these demands were not complied with within seven days, he should leave Washington with the whole staff of the legation as well as the archives, and repair to London. Although the contents of the private note were for the time being kept secret by Lord Lyons, yet the President and the Cabinet understood clearly that the alternative before them was that of prompt compliance with the British demands or war. That a war with Great Britain under the circumstances then existing would ruin the Union cause could hardly be doubted.

APPENDIX III

(See illustration on pages 136-37)

A fragment found among the private papers of Schurz illustrates his practice of writing "trial" sentences and paragraphs. On pages 63-64 above, this material is incorporated into the essay.

The left-hand page of the fragment reads:

They were not far out of the way. The Sumner incident was indeed [not a cause?] It was only a symptom, but a symptom of a distemper beyond the ordinary remedies. When between two men there is a dispute about interest they both consider vital to [themselves?], about which their views and feelings are so radically different that they no longer understand one another in argument, and about which by the breaking of one compromise further compromise has become unprofitable, there then remains nothing but fight. The abrogation of the Mo [Missouri] Compromise in the interest of slavery was really the beginning of civil war.

So it is between two portions of a people in [a?] free state one of which is not so decidedly and conspicuously superior in strength that the other acknowledges the necessity of submission. Separation or fight was the only alternative.

They were at the far end of the way. The line
was not very long, but it was only a single
line, a single line of a single line, the
only one. The line was the only one
left and interest they both made with it to
the end, that is, the line and the line
so readily appear that they no longer make
the line in the line, and that is why
by the backing of our compromise further down
from the line in the line, the line
mainly sitting the line. The line of
the line is the line of the line
over the line of the line.

So it is better for looking of a program
for the sum of what is and is not
and especially requires in strength
then the other with no doubt the necessity of eating
separation or fibres was the only alternative.

Washed & dished with

The state of things in the U. S. was rapidly
approaching these conditions. It is true, the
people of the North were by no means united
in sentiment ^(although most united). The democratic party, ~~under~~ though
leadership, still commanded a majority in
several Northern States; ^{but there were only few} ~~and its members~~
among its members who ~~were~~ were really pro-
slavery men in the Southern States. They greatly
majority made themselves believe not only that
it was a fair thing to let the people of the transition
decide for themselves whether they would have slavery
or not, ~~but also~~ according to Haynes's
pop. sovereignty doctrine, but also that under the
practical operation of that doctrine there would be
no additional slave states, and that, therefore,
the organization of ~~abolitionist~~ the Hygienic party
on anti-slavery grounds, which was the object of

NOTES

1. [The first sentence from the rough draft has been inserted here to provide a smoothly written opening paragraph. The second draft began with comments on the E. L. Pierce biography which are printed in Appendix I.]
2. [See George H. Haynes, *Charles Sumner* (George W. Jacobs and Company, Philadelphia, 1909), p. 405, referred to hereafter as Haynes, *Sumner*.]
3. [Judge Joseph Story's letter of introduction to the jurists of England, 1837; quoted by Schurz in *A Memorial to Charles Sumner from the City of Boston* (Boston, 1874), p. 89.]
4. [*Ibid.*]
5. Charles Sumner to Charles S. Daveis, August 4, 1837; quoted by Edward L. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner* (Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1877-1893), Vol. I, p. 192, referred to hereafter as Pierce.
6. [*Ibid.*]
7. [Charles Sumner to Professor Simon Greenleaf, December 7, 1837, Pierce, Vol. I, p. 210.]
8. [Charles Sumner to Professor Greenleaf, July 1, 1838, Pierce, Vol. I, p. 325.]
9. [Pierce, Vol. I, p. 303.]
10. [*Ibid.*, p. 306.]
11. [*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 149.]
12. [Peleg W. Chandler quoted by Pierce, Vol. II, p. 252.]
13. [*Ibid.*, p. 253.]
14. [Charles Sumner to Dr. Samuel G. Howe, August 16, 1844, Pierce, Vol. II, p. 312.]
15. [Charles Sumner, *Works* (Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1875-1883), Vol. I, p. 9, referred to hereafter as Sumner, *Works*. Also quoted by Pierce, Vol. II, p. 343.]
16. [Charles Sumner in the *Boston Courier*, August 13, 1846, as quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 117.]
17. [Pierce, Vol. III, p. 119.]
18. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. II, p. 62; also Pierce, Vol. III, p. 145.]
19. [Cf. Sumner, *Works*, Vol. II, pp. 149-150.]

20. [Charles Sumner to Charles Francis Adams, December 15, 1850, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 233.]
21. [*Ibid.*]
22. [Charles Sumner to John Bigelow, January 11, 1851, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 239. Cf. Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 99.]
23. [H. W. Longfellow, *Diary*, April 24, 1851, quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 246.]
24. [Charles Sumner to his brother, George Sumner, April 29, 1851, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 247.]
25. [Theodore Parker to Charles Sumner, April 26, 1851, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 250.]
26. [Cf. Haynes, *Sumner*, p. 381.]
27. [Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 365.]
28. [Among the personal papers of Carl Schurz the editor discovered some notes written by Schurz on the back of a letter addressed to him by Aron Haake, from Washington, D. C., dated February 24, 1894:
 " 'The slavery question has not two sides' As to the moral bearings of the question—question of right and wrong—this was correct. As to the way in which slavery could best be got rid of, it was not correct. He not only refused to see any moral excuse for the opposite argument, but could never appreciate how far that opposite argument was apt to make an impression upon ordinary minds. Not to see two sides of a question was an element of weakness in a statesman but an element of strength in a moral agitator and a revolutionary character.
 He was a moral terrorist—making it appear as a sort of moral delinquency not to follow him—which men were afraid of."]
29. [Charles Sumner to H. W. Longfellow, December 28, 1851, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 264.]
30. [Charles Sumner to Dr. Samuel G. Howe, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 282.]
31. [Pierce, Vol. III, p. 293.]
32. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, pp. 97-98.]
33. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 194; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 298.]
34. [Pierce, Vol. III, p. 299.]
35. [*Ibid.*, p. 300.]
36. [See Haynes, *Sumner*, p. 157.]

37. [William H. Seward to Charles Sumner, November 9, 1852, Pierce, Vol. III, pp. 316-317.]
38. [Charles Sumner to Mrs. Lydia Marie Child, January 14, 1853, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 322.]
39. [Pierce, Vol. III, p. 350.]
40. [*Ibid.*, p. 366.]
41. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 343.]
42. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 368; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 380.]
43. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 414; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 385.]
44. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 414; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 385.]
45. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 379; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 384.]
46. [Charles Sumner to Theodore Parker, May 17, 1856, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 439.]
47. [Pierce, Vol. III, p. 470.]
48. [*Ibid.*, p. 498.]
49. [T. B. Macaulay to the Duchess of Argyll; quoted in her letter to Charles Sumner, September 8, 1863, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 504.]
50. [Charles Sumner to Theodore Parker, March 1, 1857, Pierce, Vol. III, p. 519.]
51. [Henry Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America* (James R. Osgood and Company, Boston, 1872), Vol. II, p. 495. See also Pierce, Vol. III, p. 523.]
52. [John Bigelow, June 27, 1860, quoted by Pierce, Vol. III, p. 607, note 1.]
53. [Boston *Courier*, December 4, 1860; quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 3, note 1.]
54. [Separated from the manuscript, on the back of an unpublished letter, dated February 24, 1894, from Aron Haake to Carl Schurz, the latter made some notes which are relevant:
"It may have seemed right to temporize so as to insure Lincoln's inauguration, but it was not right:
1. It was making the introduction into office of a constitutionally elected President dependent upon a bargain subsequent to the election. Mexican politics.
2. The rebels would have prevented the inauguration in spite of efforts at compromise if they had had the means

of doing so. They had not. Each party overestimating the strength of the other. The rebels could have marched in to Washington if they had had a strong organized force. The Unionists could at the same time have marched in to Richmond, if they had had an organized force of moderate strength.”]

55. [Sumner to Dr. Samuel G. Howe, January 17, 1861, Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 9; Sumner to F. W. Ballard, January 26, 1861, Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 16.]
56. [Haynes, *Sumner*, p. 433.]
57. [Cf. Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 34.]
58. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 152; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 63, note 3.]
59. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 12; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 43.]
60. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 28; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 44.]
61. [Frederick W. Seward, *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State* (Derby and Miller, N. Y., 1891), Vol. II, pp. 496-497.]
62. [John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History* (Century Company, New York, 1890), Vol. III, pp. 445-447.]
63. [Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 39.]
64. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 52.]
65. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 51.]
66. [From this point to the conclusion the material is supplied by the first draft of the biography, which was found among the private papers of Schurz, as the introduction explains.]
67. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 53.
68. [Here the editor has omitted material which would be mere duplication of previous statements in the second draft.]
69. [Schurz inserts here a reference to Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 73, where this comment is found: “‘State suicide’ found little favor; it startled conservative minds; and it went counter to the idea of historical continuity, which is always a national aspiration,—the idea, as Chief-Justice Chase at a later day called it, of ‘an indestructible Union of indestructible States.’”]
70. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 77.
71. [*Ibid.*]

72. [The editor has omitted material here as explained above in note 68.]
73. [Sumner to John Bright, October 28, 1862, in Pierce, Vol. IV], 107.
74. [Sumner to the Duchess of Argyll, November 12, 1862, quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV], 107.
75. [Schurz undoubtedly refers to a dispatch to C. F. Adams, July 5, 1862, which had come to Sumner's attention. Seward "treated armed rebels ('the extreme advocates of African slavery') and loyal antislavery men ('its most vehement opponents') as 'acting in concert together to precipitate a servile war,— . . . the former by making the most desperate attempts to overthrow the Federal Union; the latter by demanding an edict of universal emancipation as a lawful and necessary, if not, as they say, the only legitimate way of saving the Union.'" Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 110.]
76. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 117.
77. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 121.
78. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 122-124.
79. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 128 ;
80. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 129.
81. [Sumner to the Duchess of Argyll, April 7, 1863, in Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 132.]
82. [*Ibid.*]
83. [Sumner to John Bright, July 21, 1863, quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV], 143.
84. [Richard Cobden to Sumner, February 12, 1862, in Pierce, Vol. IV], 157.
85. [See Pierce, Vol. IV, pp. 147, 151, 155.]
86. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 161.
87. [Sumner to George Bemis, December 18, 1863, in Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 171.]
88. [Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 185.]
89. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 211.]
90. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 230.
91. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 245.]
92. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 268.]
93. [*Ibid.*]
94. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 279.]
95. [Sumner, *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 472-474; also quoted by Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 291.]

96. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 291.
97. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 303-304. [Sumner married a young widow, Mrs. Alice Mason Hooper, in 1866; he was then fifty-five. A year later the couple separated; they were divorced some years after that.]
98. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 319.
99. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 324.
100. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 328.]
101. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 337.
102. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 343.
103. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 346, note 1.]
104. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 347.
105. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 350.
106. [*Ibid.*, note 3.]
107. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 352.
108. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 354.
109. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 365-366.]
110. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 379.
111. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 385.
112. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 423.
113. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 426.
114. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 430.
115. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 431.
116. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 434.
117. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 458.
118. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 491-492.
119. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 499.]
120. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 501.]
121. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 584.
122. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 515. [This is a topic which Schurz might have intended to discuss at some length. He was generally recognized as a leader in the movement and served as chairman of the party's convention in Cincinnati, May, 1872. The convention got out of hand and produced a result which was very disappointing to Schurz and to others as well, namely, the nomination of Horace Greeley. Hence, the exclamation point following his name in the text below. Schurz always referred thereafter, in his personal correspondence, to the Cincinnati Convention as a fiasco.]
123. [Pierce, Vol. IV], 530.
124. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 550.

125. [See *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 589.]
126. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 588.
127. [Sumner refused to be drawn into making inflammatory remarks about the Spanish seizure, 1873, of the "Virginus," a vessel sailing in Cuban waters. Pierce, Vol. IV], 574.
128. [Pierce, Vol. IV, p. 577.]
129. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV], 585.

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Sumner has to this day remained one of the most controversial and much-maligned figures of the Lincoln era.

Schurz possessed unique qualifications for writing about Sumner. As a contemporary, he could draw upon first-hand knowledge of many of the events in which Sumner achieved prominence. As a close acquaintance, he could understand thoroughly Sumner's thought and feeling. As a talented writer, he could present Sumner with skill and critical perspective.

Schurz and Sumner agreed on many things: both pressed Lincoln for an emancipation policy; both opposed President Johnson after the war; both felt the necessity for Congressional reconstruction to secure equal rights for the Negro; both felt the need for civil service reform; both opposed the corruption of President Grant's administration; and both tried to defeat Grant's bid for a second term. As it turned out, Carl Schurz was the man who delivered the eulogy at Charles Sumner's funeral.

The publication of this essay, casting a new and intimate light on Sumner, should help us to assess more accurately Sumner's role under Lincoln's administration.

The editor, Arthur Reed Hogue, who discovered the Schurz manuscript, has been academic dean at Hanover College, assistant professor of history at the University of Illinois, and is now associate professor of history at Indiana University. He is a specialist in the history of early English law, especially as in this aspect of Lincolniana.

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